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ABSTRACT

This document consists of a 5-day high school level study unit on issues surrounding immigration into the United States. The lessons seek to engage students in the immigration debate while at the same time exploring the topic's historical background. At the core of the unit is a framework of four options for U.S. immigration policy: (1) "Opening Ourselves to the World"; (2) "Balancing Our Responsibilities"; (3) "Competing in a Competitive World"; and "Recognizing Our Limits." The intent of the unit is that through exploring a wide range of alternatives, students will gain a deeper understanding of the values underlying specific policy recommendations. Lessons within the unit include role-playing activities, readings, and essay writing. The material includes a lesson plan, suggested student activities, topics for further consideration, supplementary documents for teachers, and a list of 12 suggested readings. (LBG)

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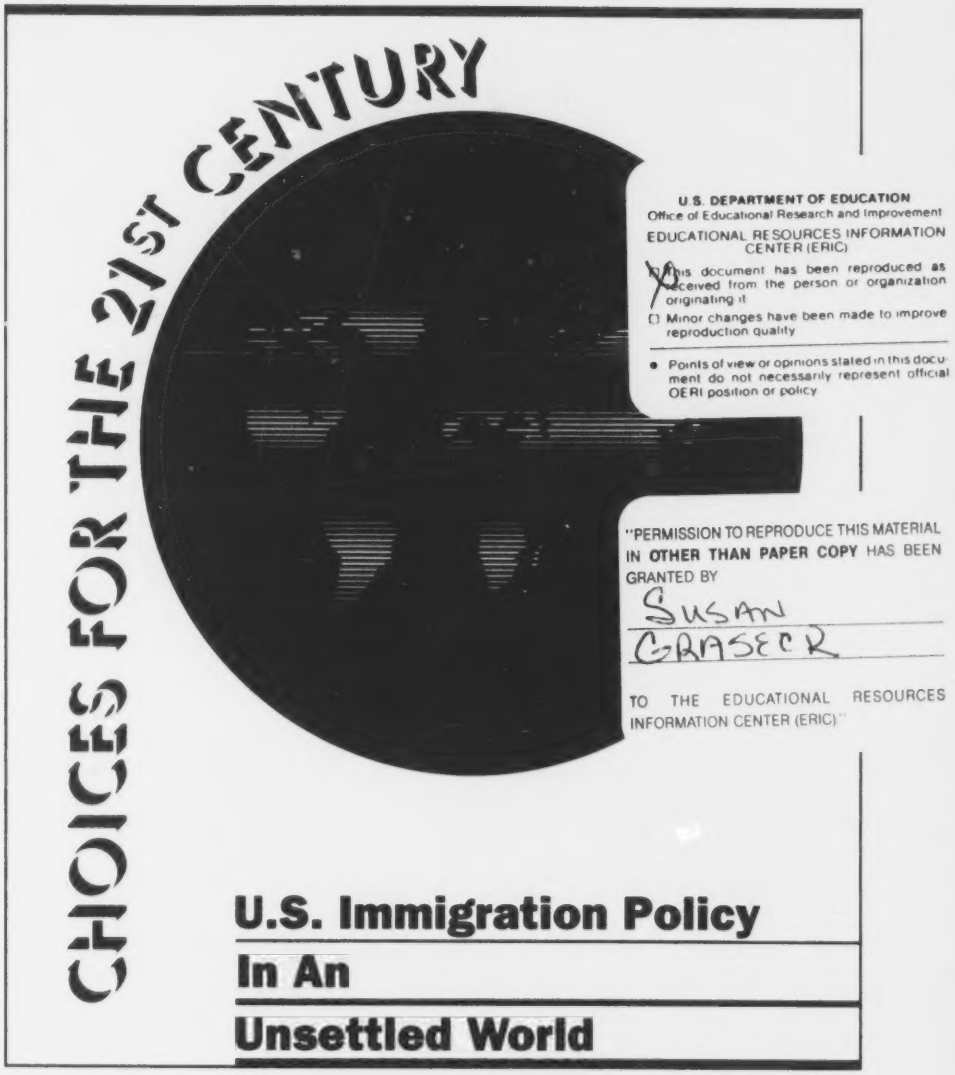

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U.S. Immigration Policy In An Unsettled World

ALTERNATIVES FOR PUBLIC DEBATE
AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

A project of the Center for Foreign Policy Development

Brown University, Box 1948, Providence, RI 02912

SO 022 714

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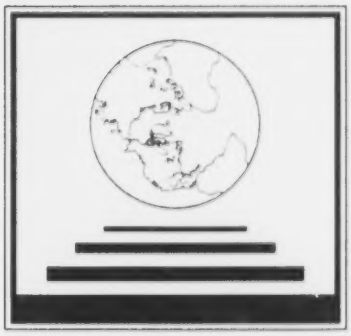

THE CHOICES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION PROJECT was established at the Center for Foreign Policy Development to help citizens think constructively about foreign policy issues, to improve participatory citizenship skills, and to encourage public judgment on policy priorities.

THE CENTER FOR FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENT of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University is a non-profit research organization. Its mandate is to bring together scholars, policymakers, and the public in a search for policy choices that can lead to a consensus on U.S. national security and foreign policy.

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CHOICES
for the 21st Century Education Project

October 1992

Project Director
Susan Graseck

Curriculum Coordinator
Mark Malkasian

Program Coordinator
Jim Hoebbel

Project Assistant
Ashley Tucker

Staff Assistant
Anne Campau Prout

Research Assistant
Richard Chang
Susan Trabert

The Choices for the 21st Century Education Project develops curricula for high schools and colleges on current foreign policy issues and offers workshops, institutes, and in-service programs for high school teachers. Course materials place special emphasis on the importance of educating students in their participatory role as citizens.

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Mark Garrison
Director

Richard Smoke
Research Director

Note to Teachers

Immigration is linked so closely with the American experience that often it is not thought of as a public policy issue. Indeed, many of the values that unite Americans as a nation are tied to immigration. Immigration has not only framed our vision of the U.S. role in the world, but has seeped into our view of human nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, saw in immigration a phenomenon that "will construct a new race, a new religion, a new state, a new literature" in the United States.

The idealism surrounding immigration explains in large part the deep feelings it engenders in the public policy arena. In recent year, these sentiments have jostled with concerns about the economy, race relations, the environment, and other issues to recast the discourse on U.S. immigration policy. From 1980 to 1990, immigration law underwent a period of change comparable in importance to the reforms of 1965 and the early 1920s. At the same time, the debate over immigration has expanded to incorporate a broad range of foreign policy issues. The discussion now features arguments on U.S. relations with Latin America, international trade, and the worldwide refugee crisis.

U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World seeks to engage students in the leading issues driving the current immigration debate while at the same time introducing them to the historical antecedents of this highly charged subject. At the core of the unit is a framework of four distinct options for U.S. immigration policy. By exploring a wide-ranging spectrum of alternatives, students gain a deeper understanding of the values underlying specific policy recommendations. The background readings are intended to provide students with information necessary to consider this complex topic. Part I reviews how the course of economic development, immigration trends, and foreign policy concerns have left an impact on the history of immigration law. Part II surveys the most pressing issues of the past two decades and prepares students to formulate their own ideas on the future direction of U.S. immigration policy.

U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World includes a five-day lesson plan and student activities. The lesson plan calls on students to review two documents — the 1911 Dillingham Commission report and the 1981 Hesburgh Commission report — that served as the foundation for major revisions in immigration law. The second and third day of the lesson plan feature a simulation in which students assume the role of advocates for the four options. Finally, in the fifth day, students consider the long-range consequences of their own options.

Below is an outline of the "Five-Day Lesson Plan" found on pages 21-23. The "Student Text" (pages 1-20) contains the background readings and the four options. The student activities follow the lesson plan.

Homework: Read Part I of the background readings and complete "Study Guide — Part I"

Day One: Immigration policy in U.S. history
Homework: Read Part II of the background readings and complete "Study Guide — Part II"

Day Two: Role playing the four options: organization and presentation
Homework: Complete preparations for the simulation

Day Three: Role playing the four options: debate and discussion
Homework: Read "Introduction to the Final Report of the Select (Hesburgh) Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy"

Day Four: Weighing immigration reform
Homework: Read the four options, then fill out "Focusing Your Thoughts" and complete "Your Option Five"

Day Five: Looking into the future
Extra Challenge: Write essay on proposal for U.S. immigration policy.

Part I: The Role of Immigration in the American Experience

...Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

When these words were inscribed in 1886 on the Statue of Liberty that overlooks New York Harbor, the United States was a country of fewer than 60 million people. Vast tracts of land in the West and the Great Plains were still largely unsettled, and the nation's growing cities were in the middle of the Industrial Revolution. Even though many Americans viewed the immigrants streaming into the country with apprehension, few could deny the need for more farmers and factory workers.

To say that we are a nation of immigrants is more than an acknowledgment of history. It also reflects how Americans perceive our country's role in the world. Since records were first kept in 1820, more than 58 million immigrants have entered the United States. Forty percent of that total were admitted between 1881 and 1920. In 1886, 334,000 immigrants entered the United States. At the time, the country was in the early stages of a forty-year upsurge in immigration that was to transform American society and spark debate about U.S. immigration policy.

After a lull of nearly half a century, immigration is again on the rise. The 8.7 million newcomers who came in the 1980s nearly equaled the previous peak decade of U.S. immigration, from 1901 to 1910. In 1992, more than one million immigrants are expected to come to the United States. As in 1886, these latest newcomers are arriving at a time when U.S. immigration policy is again the subject of growing controversy. With the U.S. population exceeding 250 million, many Americans contend that the United States does not have the room to accommodate more immigrants, while others argue that we cannot afford to close our door to the skills and energy brought by newcomers. Despite its sluggish economy in recent years, the United States continues to accept more immigrants than the rest of the world's countries combined.

Immigration fuels a growing nation

The generation that authored the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution traced its roots primarily to the British Isles and other areas of northwest Europe. They welcomed the prospect of continued immigration, but also sought to protect the democratic institutions of the young republic from outside influences.

George Washington expressed in 1783 both the hopes and concerns of the nation's early leaders: "The bosom of America is open to receive not only the opulent and respectable stranger but the oppressed and persecuted of all nations and religions; whom we shall welcome to a participation of all our rights and privileges, if by decency and propriety of conduct they appear to merit the enjoyment."

The Constitution said little about immigration and citizenship other than to make these issues the responsibility of Congress. Before 1820, the United States did not even bother to count how many newcomers reached its shores by ship. Not until the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 was citizenship clearly granted to anyone born in the United States, including African-Americans. (Native Americans, however, were not admitted to full citizenship until 1924.)

Even without an official policy, the United States proved to be a natural magnet for immigrants in the 1800s. For most of the century, a nearly ideal balance existed between the problems of Europe and the needs of the United States. In much of Europe, the forces of the Industrial Revolution, shifts in agriculture, and a soaring population left millions of people unable to make a living. In addition, a blight wiped out the potato crop in much of northwestern Europe in the late 1840s. Ireland was hit particularly hard by the blight, losing half a million people to disease and starvation.

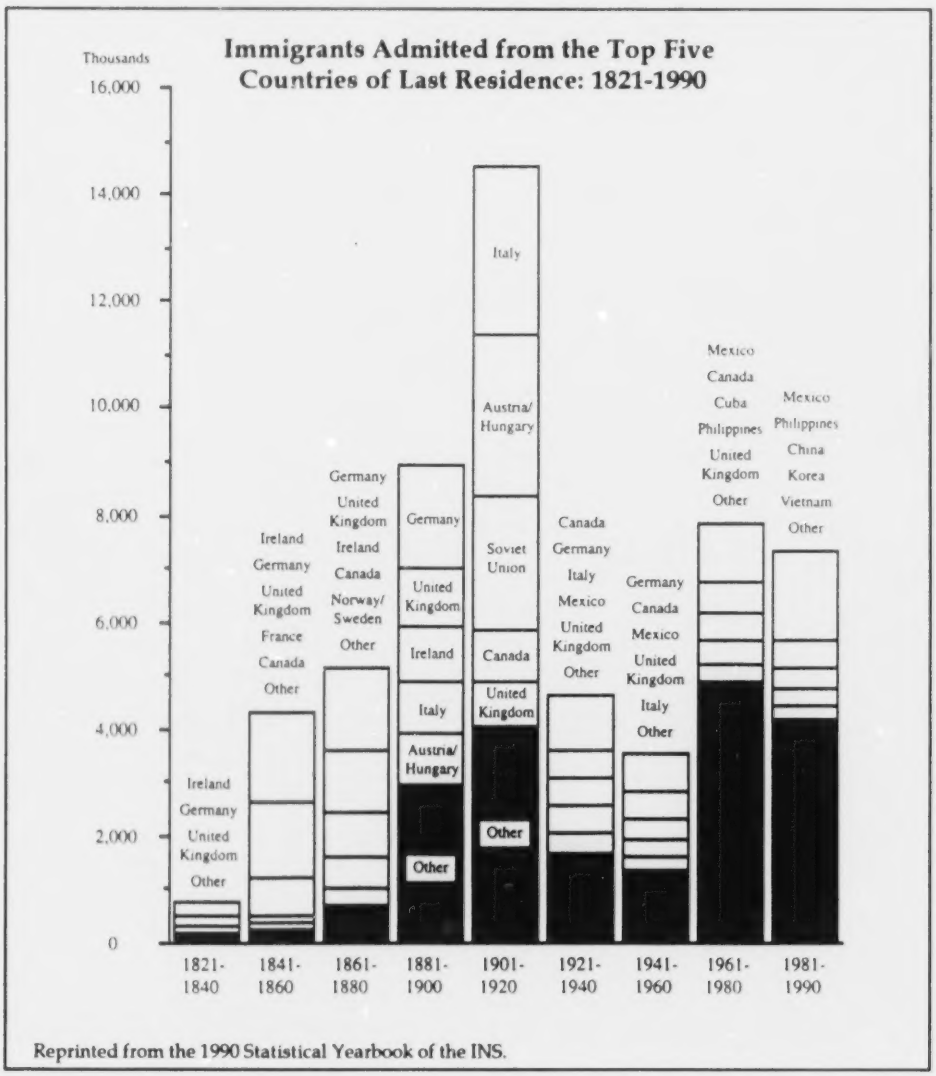
Meanwhile, the United States expanded in both size and wealth throughout the 1800s. By 1848, the country stretched across the continent. Booming factories and abundant farmland seemed capable of absorbing an endless stream of immigrants. American railroad companies actively recruited workers in Europe, while steamship lines depicted a country of boundless opportunity to spur ticket sales for the voyage across the Atlantic.

Between 1820 and 1880, 70 percent of immigrants to the United States came from Germany, Ireland, and Great Britain. During the period from 1881 to 1920, however, the majority of newcomers came from southern and eastern Europe, especially from Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. The turn of the century also marked a major change in how immigrants fitted into their adopted country. The 1890 census revealed that the unbroken frontier of the American West had been filled in. The most fertile land of the Great Plains and western valleys had been claimed. At the same time, though, the industrial cities of the Northeast and the Great Lakes region still needed cheap, unskilled labor.

The new wave of immigrants formed close-knit communities in major cities. Distinct enclaves of Italians, Poles, Jews, Greeks, and other ethnic groups peppered America's urban centers. By 1900, four out of five New Yorkers either were born abroad or were the children of immigrants.

Restrictions on immigration

While immigrants poured into the United States, however, many Americans remained ambivalent about the Statue of Liberty's inscription. From the earliest days of the republic, there was anxiety about the social and political impact of immigration. Thomas Jefferson argued against welcoming the "servile masses of Europe," fearing that they would transform the American people into a "heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass." The mayor of New York in the 1820s looked upon the Irish and the Germans as "filthy, intemperate, unused to the comforts of life and regardless of its proprieties." Half a century later, the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* feared that a new generation of immigrants brought with them "unknown gods and rites...Accents of menace alien to our air."



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The first organized opposition to open immigration emerged in the 1840s with the creation of the American Party, better known as the Know-Nothing Party for the secretiveness of its members. The Know-Nothings claimed that Irish and German immigrants, most of whom were Roman Catholic, threatened to corrupt the country's heritage. They were also behind violence designed to terrorize the newcomers. Although the Know-Nothings faded from

the political arena before the Civil War, anti-immigrant feelings remained strong.

Chinese immigrants were subject to especially cruel persecution. Between 1861 and 1880, almost 200,000 Chinese came to the United States. While best known for their work in the railroad construction crews and mines of the West, the Chinese entered almost every area of the economy. By the 1870s, Chinese workers comprised 20 to 30 percent of the labor force in California. State law, however, barred them from marrying whites or testifying in court against whites. Riots in a number of Western towns resulted in the deaths of dozens of Chinese newcomers.

Prejudice against the Chinese also prompted the first significant legislation to restrict immigration. Prior to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, immigration was more or less unregulated. Congress' only earlier attempt to control immigration had been in 1875, when a law barring the entry of criminals and prostitutes was enacted. The Chinese Exclusion Act set the stage for later efforts to establish immigration restrictions on the basis of national origin.

Anti-immigration forces in Congress sought to make literacy a requirement for entry to the United States. Since mass education was slow to advance in much of southern and eastern Europe, opponents of immigration expected that a literacy test would stem the flow of newcomers from those regions.

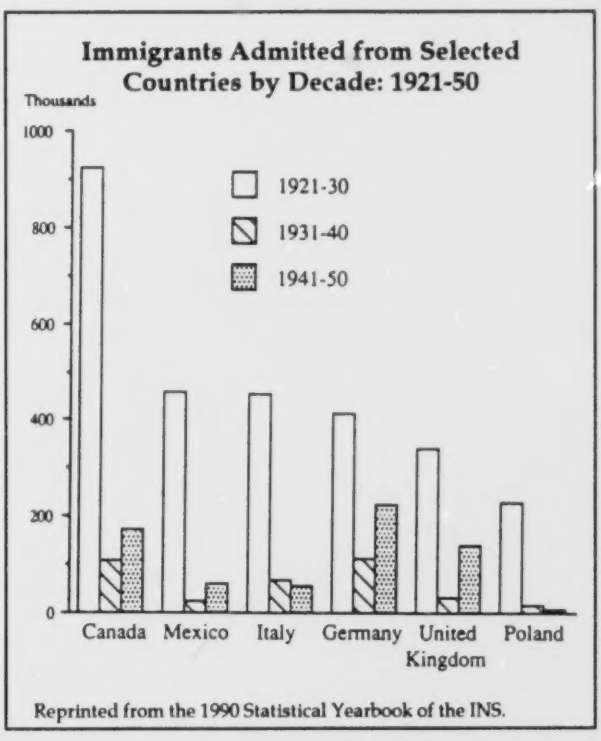
The anti-immigration movement that emerged around the turn of the century based its appeal on the ideas advocated by the Know-Nothings half a century earlier, and drew support from other groups as well. Labor union organizers, for example, feared that their struggle to raise wages and improve working conditions was being undercut by the availability of cheap immigrant labor. At the same time, political reformers believed that immigrant voters could be easily manipulated to support corrupt big-city politicians.

The campaign to restrict immigration, however, faced opposition from business leaders. Congressional legislation to require a literary test for immigrants was repeatedly vetoed by presidents from Grover Cleveland in 1895 to Woodrow Wilson in 1915. Not until 1917, with Americans caught up in the nationalistic spirit of World War I, did Congress override President Wilson's veto, and make literacy an entrance requirement. In 1921, another restrictive law was passed, creating immigration quotas on the basis of national origin. That concept served as the foundation of the Immigration Act of 1924, more commonly known as the National Origins Act.

The 1924 act grew out of recommendations presented to Congress in 1911 by the Dillingham Commission. Reflecting the mood of Congress, the commission called for new regulations to reduce immigration. More important, it proposed limiting the number of immigrants to be accepted from each country. Many of the Dillingham Commission's suggestions found their way into the legislation that followed. The 1924 act limited the annual immigration quota of each European nationality to 2 percent of its proportion in the U.S. population in 1890. For Italians, Hungarians, Poles, and other groups that had begun immigrating to the United States in large numbers only after 1890, the quotas were relatively small. Moreover, the 1924 act affirmed earlier laws that closed the door to immigration from Asia.

The Cold War guides immigration policy

The 1924 act governed U.S. immigration policy until 1952. During this period, immigration fell to its



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lowest level since the mid-1800s. The effects of the quota system, the Depression of the 1930s, and World War II combined to greatly reduce immigration from southern and eastern Europe. In the 1930s, the number of people emigrating out of the United States actually exceeded the number of immigrants coming in.

During this lull in immigration, the United States underwent a dramatic transformation. World War II not only lifted the U.S. economy out of the Depression, but also sparked a new era of technological innovation. The United States emerged from the war as the most powerful nation on earth. By the late 1940s, U.S. leaders had taken on a new range of international commitments to thwart the growing threat of the Soviet Union. The deepening Cold War redefined the U.S. role in the world and touched almost every aspect of government policy, including regulations on immigration.

The new international position of the United States was made evident in the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. The act allowed for the admission of more than 400,000 refugees left homeless by World War II and the imposition of Soviet communism on eastern Europe. The Displaced Persons Act was followed in the 1950s and 1960s by a number of special bills designed to accommodate "escapees" from communist domination. The biggest wave of refugees — approximately 700,000 — came from Cuba after a revolution brought Fidel Castro to power in 1959.

1965 opens a new era

While refugees formed a large proportion of newcomers after World War II, the basic features of immigration policy remained unchanged until 1965. Like many other important issues, immigration policy was reshaped by the political ferment of the 1960s.

Although restrictions against immigration from Asia were slightly relaxed by the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act, the system created in 1924 was maintained until the civil rights movement forced lawmakers to re-examine the national origins quotas. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, enacted during a period of robust economic growth, replaced the old quotas with a set of seven preference categories. Under the new system, priority was placed on reuniting families and attracting highly skilled professionals.

The immediate effect of the 1965 act was to boost immigration by nationalities most severely restricted by the quota system. As late as the 1950s, 68 percent of immigrants entering the United States came from Europe and Canada. The new law cleared the way for greater immigration from Asia. The emphasis on admitting professionals triggered an unprecedented wave of immigration by Asian doctors, nurses, engineers, scientists, and other university-trained specialists. The 1965 act also set in motion a chain reaction that would leave an impact on future immigration patterns. Under the preference system, newcomers with citizenship status were able to sponsor the immigration of their spouses, children, and siblings. These new arrivals, in turn, could arrange for other family members to join them.

By the 1970s, immigrants were entering the United States in the largest numbers in half a century. Officially, immigration fell under much tighter legal controls than in the early 1900s. No more than 20,000 immigrants from any single country could enter the United States annually. At the same time, the total number of immigrants to be admitted annually was limited to 290,000. (The immediate relatives of U.S. citizens — spouses, children under age 18, and parents — were exempt from the ceiling of 290,000.) Immigration law in the 1970s, however, was facing new challenges.

Despite the strict regulations, more and more immigrants were entering the country outside of normal routes, either as refugees or illegal aliens. Meanwhile, the conventional channels of the immigration system were clogged by hundreds of thousands of backlogged applications. Mexicans, for example, faced a wait of more than six years to have their applications processed. As the 1980s approached, pressure for immigration reform was gathering momentum.

Part II: Emerging Issues in U.S. Immigration Policy

Daniel Alvarez and Vuong Khoa (not their real names) typify the new generation of immigrants to come to the United States.

Daniel Alvarez first entered the United States illegally as a teenager in the late 1970s, crossing the U.S.-Mexican border to join his older brother. Alvarez settled in a small farming town outside of Fresno, California. Despite his illegal status, he graduated from high school and obtained a driver's license. Although rebellious as a teenager, Alvarez worked with his brother for one of the area's largest grape growers. He soon proved himself a quick learner, rising in a few years from farm hand to trusted foreman. At the same time, Alvarez returned frequently to his native village in Mexico to attend weddings, funerals, and other family functions. On one such trip, Alvarez married a woman from his village and returned with her to the United States to set down roots. Alvarez rented a two-bedroom house from his employer. He and his wife had four children, three of whom were born at a local public hospital that did not charge the Alvarezes for their medical expenses. In 1990, Alvarez and his family were granted U.S. citizenship under a special law passed in 1986.

Vuong Khoa was a surgeon in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. He left his homeland in 1975, just before the country fell to the communists. Like thousands of other Vietnamese who worked with Americans during the war, Khoa came to the United States seeking political asylum. During their first few months in the United States, Khoa and his family lived with relatives in Oklahoma. Despite his many years of medical experience in South Vietnam, Khoa was required to undergo two years of training before he was allowed to practice in the United States. Eventually, however, Khoa succeeded in re-establishing his reputation as a skilled surgeon in his new home. At the same time, his colleagues in Oklahoma benefited from Khoa's knowledge of traditional Vietnamese medicine.

Although their stories are in many ways unique, Alvarez and Khoa share much in common with

Immigration by Area of Intended Residence: Fiscal Year 1990

Each dot represents the location of a zip code with fifty or more immigrants. This map does not include data on immigrants admitted under the amnesty program of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. (Reprinted from the 1990 Statistical Yearbook of the INS.)

many of their fellow newcomers. Alvarez, as an illegal alien, and Khoa, as a refugee, both entered the United States outside the channels of the 1965 immigration act. In the last two decades, the ranks of immigrants have been swelled by illegal aliens who slip undetected across U.S. borders and refugees who are granted special status within the law. Of the more than 1 million immigrants expected to enter the United States in 1992, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimates that 200,000 will be illegal aliens and 141,000 will be refugees.

Khoa's level of education fits the profile of many new immigrants. The new arrivals of the last twenty years are the most highly educated group of immigrants in U.S. history. In the 1980s alone, 1.5 million college-educated immigrants joined the work force. As the case of Alvarez points out, though, society spends more than ever on new immigrants for schooling, health care, and other social services. Finally, the countries of origin of Khoa and Alvarez place them in step with recent immigration trends. Between 1971 and 1991, more than 35 percent of legal immigrants came from Asia, while almost half arrived from Latin America, including 24 percent from Mexico. Fewer than 14 percent emigrated from Europe.

The arrival of Daniel Alvarez, Vuong Khoa, and thousands like them occurred at a time when U.S. immigration law was undergoing another period of revision. The flood of refugee applications, concern over lax border control, and demands for changes in admission standards prompted Congress to take up the issue of immigration policy. As a result, three major pieces of legislation on immigration have been enacted since 1980.

Changes in immigration law

The Refugee Act of 1980 was prompted in large part by the arrival of more than 400,000 refugees from Southeast Asia between 1975 and 1980. The legislation sought to give refugee policy greater consistency by allowing for both a regular flow of refugees and emergency admissions. In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act tackled the growing issue of illegal immigration. In hopes of stemming the entry of illegal aliens, the 1986 act imposed penalties on employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers. It also allowed illegal aliens who had lived in the United States since 1981, as well as undocumented agricultural workers, to become citizens. Under this amnesty program, more than 2.8 million illegal aliens out of approximately 3 million applicants are expected to gain legal status by the time all cases are resolved.

In 1990, Congress once again addressed the general question of immigration laws. The Immigration Act of 1990 raised the limit on annual admissions to 675,000 immigrants. (The 1965 act had set the ceiling at 290,000.) The 1990 law also nearly tripled the number of immigration slots reserved for newcomers with prized job skills and their families. When the revision takes effect in 1995, over 71 percent of immigration visas will go to family members of U.S. citizens and legal residents; about 21 percent will be set aside for well-trained workers and their families; and about eight percent will be available for immigrants from countries that have received relatively few visas in previous years.

Issues for consideration

The latest round of immigration law hardly ends the debate on U.S. immigration policy. On the contrary, the legislative activity reflects the growing controversy surrounding immigration issues. Two areas of focus for Congress in the 1980s — illegal aliens and refugees — remain at the center of current discussion about immigration.

Illegal aliens

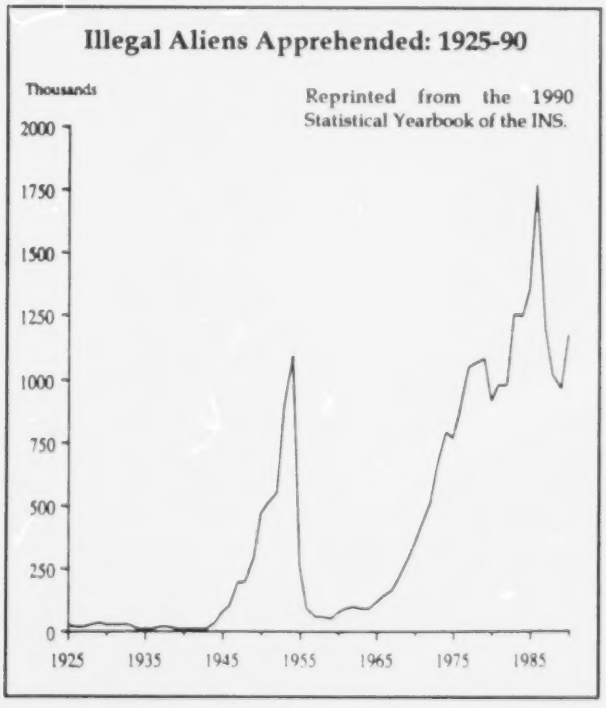
Although exact numbers are difficult to determine, research indicates that more than 200,000 illegal aliens settle permanently in the United States each year. Many arrive legally as tourists and then stay beyond the limitations of their visas. Others use false documents to slip past immigration officials. The majority, however, enter the country by crossing the U.S.-Mexican border, making the problem of illegal aliens in many respects a question of foreign policy.

Illegal aliens and border control are relatively new concepts in the history of U.S. immigration. Until 1968, there were no official limits on immigration from countries in the Western Hemisphere. There was not even an attempt to monitor the borders until 1924. Mexican workers, in particular, were a critical part of the labor force in the Southwest, but they

generally worked in agriculture during the growing season and then returned to their homes in Mexico. From 1942 to 1964, the *bracero* program gave this arrangement official status, permitting the entry of four million to five million temporary agricultural workers.

The end of the *bracero* program did not end the movement of workers across the borders. Large farms and, increasingly, low-wage industries continued to rely on Mexican workers. Meanwhile, Mexico's high rate of unemployment and wage levels that were one-tenth of American standards pushed more laborers across the border in search of employment.

Since the 1960s, both the forces pushing illegal aliens northward and those attracting them to the United States have grown stronger. In 1972, the INS caught about 500,000 illegal aliens trying to cross the border. In 1986, the year that the Immigration Reform and Control Act was enacted, that figure had increased to nearly 1.8 million. The composition of the illegal alien population has changed in the last two decades. Although the typical illegal alien is still a single young man, more women and children are entering the country illegally as well. Fewer than one-quarter of today's illegal aliens work in agriculture. The majority live and work in large cities. In addition, Mexicans make up a smaller proportion of illegal aliens than in the past. Increasingly, illegal aliens are arriving from Central America, the Caribbean, and East Asia. In 1984, for example, the Border Patrol in Texas arrested would-be immigrants from 43 countries. The 1986 act was intended to cut off the flow of illegal aliens by penalizing employers who hired them. In fact, illegal aliens in many areas have had little difficulty obtaining false documents to qualify for jobs.



The 1986 act also promised more effective border controls, although the Border Patrol of the INS has not been given the funding needed to expand its force. Rather, the Border Patrol has continued to rely on about 2,800 agents to police the entire U.S.-Mexican border. The number of apprehensions of illegal aliens in 1990 was down to less than 1.2 million, but recent evidence suggests that border traffic is increasing.

For more than half its nearly 2,000 miles, the U.S.-Mexican border is marked by the shallow Rio Grande. In the empty deserts to the west, it consists of three strands of barbed wire. Only near a few cities, such as the area south of San Diego, is there a steel fence dividing the two countries. Experts estimate that half of all illegal entries into the United States take place along a fourteen-mile stretch of border that runs from the Pacific Ocean to the desert foothills. Although 800 Border Patrol agents are assigned to this area, fewer than half of those illegally crossing the border are stopped, according to official estimates.

Advocates of more stringent border control argue that the ineffectiveness of the Border Patrol is a threat to national security. They point to studies showing that the U.S.-Mexican border is increasingly becoming a crossroads for drug smuggling, and they fear that international terrorists may use the same route.

The cost of providing social services to illegal aliens is also part of the border control debate. Although nearly three million illegal aliens were legalized by the 1986 act, studies indicate that three million to four million illegal aliens now live in the United States. Like immigrants in general, the illegal aliens are concentrated in a few states, primarily California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, and New York. In 1983, the Supreme Court ruled that states must provide illegal

aliens with schooling. That decision, along with the growing proportion of women and children among the illegal alien population, has added to education and health care budgets.

The same states that are burdened by the social service needs of illegal aliens, however, are also home to businesses that employ them. Some employers contend that Americans are unwilling to work hard for low wages. Whether stitching pants in a clothing factory, washing dishes in a restaurant, or harvesting fruits and vegetables, illegal aliens have become a key element of the work force in many areas. Critics of the practice maintain that some employers prefer hiring undocumented workers because they are unlikely to complain about low pay and poor working conditions. In fact, law enforcement officials report that sweatshops operating outside the law in the garment industry have made a comeback in Los Angeles and New York thanks to the availability of illegal alien labor.

Despite warmer U.S.-Mexican relations in the past few years, border control has proven a thorny foreign policy issue. Mexican leaders remain sensitive to U.S. attitudes toward Mexican workers. They remember how the Border Patrol was used to deport hundreds of thousands of Mexicans in 1929 and again in 1954. They warn that sealing the border off would revive anti-American feelings in Mexico and hurt economic relations with the United States' third leading trading partner.

Adding a new dimension to the issue is the North American Free Trade Agreement that has been negotiated by the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The proposed agreement would create a regional trading bloc of 370 million people by lowering trade barriers among the three countries. With Congress expected to vote on the free trade pact in early 1993, Mexican officials and free trade advocates in the United States have said that the agreement will reduce the flow of illegal aliens by creating better-paying jobs in Mexico. Even if the trade agreement is approved, some experts on illegal immigration argue the United States must focus greater attention on developing the economies of Mexico and its neighbors to keep potential illegal aliens at home. They maintain that increased foreign aid to the countries of Latin America and incentives for low-wage American industries to invest in the region are needed to help generate more local jobs.

Refugees

The relationship between refugee policy and foreign policy is also closely intertwined. Since the late 1940s, U.S. immigration policy has favored refugees escaping from communist countries. The two biggest influxes of refugees — the Cubans and the Southeast Asians — have been part of that policy. Of the more than 1.2 million refugees admitted from 1981 to 1991, 94 percent came from communist nations. Even with the end of the Cold War, old foreign policy priorities have continued to define refugee admissions. In 1991, for example, the United States issued more immigration visas to applicants from the Soviet Union than from any other country. The figures surpass total Soviet immigration for all of the 1980s. In 1992, 43 percent of the refugees to be resettled in the United States will come from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The 1980 Refugee Act opened the door for the United States to accept more refugees. It also changed the definition of refugee to conform with United Nations standards. According to the 1980 act, a refugee is a person "unwilling or unable to return to such a country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

During the 1980s, the internationally recognized refugee population nearly doubled to 16 million. At the same time, refugee applications to the United States shot up by twenty times. Critics of U.S. refugee policy charge that many of the 130,000 newcomers admitted as refugees in 1991 were not fleeing persecution but simply looking for a better life. Meanwhile, defenders of a generous refugee policy argue that the United States' compassion toward refugees springs from one of the best elements of the American political tradition. In recent years, the contrasting experiences of two different refugee groups — the Cuban "Marielitos" and the Haitian "boat people" — has served to stir up the debate over refugee policy.

In April 1980, Cuba's communist leader, Fidel Castro, announced that Cubans wishing to emigrate were free to leave only if they sailed directly to the United States from Cuba's Mariel Harbor. Cuban-Americans responded by organizing a boatlift to bring their compatriots to the United States. Initially,

President Jimmy Carter welcomed the "Freedom Flotilla" as an opportunity to embarrass Castro. In the course of five months, about 125,000 "Marielitos" arrived in the United States.

During the early stages of the boatlift, however, U.S. immigration officials received evidence that Castro was using the exodus to ship out Cuban criminals. Although the boatlift was a violation of immigration law, the Carter administration did not halt its progress. In the United States, however, four military camps were set up to detain "Marielitos" suspected of having a criminal past. At the same time, a majority of the Cuban newcomers were allowed to enter American society. Legislation in 1986 granted almost all of the "Marielitos" permanent resident status, opening the way to full citizenship.

Although the Haitian "boat people" share much in common with the "Marielitos," the official U.S. response to their plight has set them apart. In September 1991, a military coup overthrew Haiti's democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and prompted thousands of Haitians to flee their island homeland. President George Bush, however, held that only a small portion of those fleeing Haiti were eligible for political asylum. Instead, the United States began returning to the island those Haitians who failed to meet the Bush administration's definition of refugee.

U.S. measures did not block the outpouring of Haitians, especially after an economic embargo imposed by Bush to force the coup leaders from power made life in Haiti still more difficult. In the spring of 1992, a record number of Haitians set sail for the United States. Bush authorized the Coast Guard to pick up the Haitian "boat people" and return them to the island without determining their eligibility for political asylum. Critics of the policy charged that the president was failing to abide by the 1980 Refugee Act and claimed that the "Marielitos" had received better treatment because they had fled a communist country. They also charged that the Haitians were being discriminated against because they were black. Bush was urged to grant the Haitians "temporary protected status," a provision created by the Immigration Act of 1990. The Bush administration, though, seemed to fear that easing U.S. policy on Haitian refugees would set off a flood of would-be immigrants from all over the Caribbean.

Assessing the impact of immigration

Although many points in the immigration discussion are complex, the essential question of the debate is clear-cut: How does immigration affect the United States? Experts on immigration policy look for answers to that question by examining issues involving economics, education, the environment, foreign policy, and other areas.

The economy

Economic concerns tend to dominate the immigration debate. For most of this century, business leaders and big farmers have tended to favor open immigration policies to ensure an adequate supply of workers. In the early 1900s, the boom in manufacturing was fueled in good part by the steady flow of unskilled immigrants. Although opportunities for unskilled factory workers have declined since World War II, other businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, continue to depend on low-wage labor to hold down costs.

NEW POLICY ON HAITIAN REFUGEES
ARE YOU DROWNING FOR ECONOMIC OR FOR POLITICAL REASONS?
WASSERMAN
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Supporters of open immigration policies note that many high-tech industries have come to rely on newcomers. About one-quarter of immigrant workers are college graduates, many with degrees in engineering, computer science, chemistry, and other fields that are in high demand. Moreover, immigrants often leave behind family, friends, and other connections to potential export markets. Immigrants from Asia, for example, have contributed to U.S. trade with the vibrant economies of East Asia.

In many of the biggest U.S. cities, immigrants have helped revive downtown business districts in the past two decades. Without the influx of immigrants, the nation's ten largest cities would have experienced a drop in population during the 1980s. Instead, many immigrants have opened up small businesses, created new jobs, and strengthened the local tax base.

Historically, opposition to open immigration laws has come from labor union leaders. They point out that the rate of unemployment among American workers has remained stubbornly high for much of the past two decades. Labor leaders claim that high levels of immigration have taken away jobs from native-born Americans. They also maintain that the flow of unskilled workers into the economy holds down wages at the bottom of the employment ladder.

Other critics argue that U.S. immigration policy drains poor countries of their most highly educated professionals. Experts estimate that about half of the foreign students in the United States do not return to their homeland after graduation. Officials in some poor countries have even made the case that they should be compensated by the United States for highly skilled emigrants that leave their nations.

Social services

In addition to weighing economic advantages and disadvantages, the immigration debate also involves measuring the cost of newcomers in terms of education, health care, welfare, and other social services. For immigrants coming to the United States at the turn of the century, the government offered little help, other than providing free education for their children. Since the 1960s, however, the United States has established a wide range of programs to assist the poor.

Although studies indicate that immigrants are not much more likely to receive welfare than the general population, many often need special help during the first few years after their arrival. This has placed a substantial burden on a few areas. In 1991, for example, six states — California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey — received 77 percent of all the immigrants admitted. California alone was the destination of 35 percent of immigrants during the 1980s. According to California Governor Pete Wilson, the latest wave of immigrants is taking more resources out of the state than it is putting in. He attributes California's budget deficit in part to the jump in education, health care, and welfare costs for immigrants.

Similar expenses have strained other areas of heavy immigration. In New York City, 120,000 immigrant students from 167 countries have entered the school system in the past three years. Among the newcomers, 22

percent speak little English and often require special bilingual classes. In Seattle, 21 percent of the city's students come from homes where English is not the family's native language.

Population and the environment

The concentration of immigrants in a handful of states has also raised questions about the relationship between immigration policy and population trends. In California, for example, the state's population grew 20 percent during the 1980s, with immigrants accounting for more than one-quarter of the increase. With more than 30 million people, California's traffic problems are worse than ever. The population pressures have also intensified competition between farmers and city dwellers for scarce water. Population growth threatens to aggravate environmental problems in other parts of the country as well.

Like other countries in the wealthy, developed world, the United States has experienced a drop in birth rates for most of this century. If immigration were closed off entirely, the U.S. population would actually begin falling around the year 2020. At current levels of immigration, however, the population is expected to reach about 350 million by the year 2050 — an increase of almost 100 million people. Although U.S. population growth rates are far below those of Mexico and other developing countries, they remain among the highest in the developed world.

Conclusion

Almost everyone familiar with immigration issues agrees that history is not the best guide in considering the future of U.S. immigration policy. The United States was a vastly different country during the period of 1880-1920 — the previous major wave of immigration. Americans of a century ago had few foreign policy issues to take into account. Foreign trade at the time was important, but the United States was not nearly as dependent on the global market. Furthermore, overpopulation and environmental problems were concepts still unheard of.

Americans today are charting a new role in the world for the United States. For four decades after World War II, the Cold War with the Soviet Union guided not only U.S. foreign policy, but also influenced immigration policy. As the United States considers new priorities, immigration policy will serve as an important component in our country's international relations.

In many respects, the city of Miami brings home the debate over the future of immigration. Like no other major American city, Miami has been transformed by immigration in the past thirty years. Before 1960, it was a quiet town best known for its nearby beaches. The communist revolution in Cuba, however, set off a huge influx of Cubans. In the 1970s, they were joined by newcomers from Haiti. The 1980s brought a large inflow of Nicaraguans, Peruvians, and others from Central and South America. By 1992, nearly three-quarters of Miami residents spoke a language other than English at home.

In Miami's Calle Ocho district, fruit and vegetable stalls sell mangoes, plantains, and papayas. Dominoes is the game of choice at the city park. Signs in Spanish advertise legal services, eye care, hair styling, and political candidates. The area has emerged as an important crossroads in trade between the United States and Latin America. It has also become a hotbed of ethnic tension. Riots have erupted in Miami three times over the past twelve years. The American-born population of the city actually fell by 90,000 in the 1980s.

What Miami represents to other Americans will have a key impact on the immigration debate. For some, the city embodies what is best in America. In a few short decades, newcomers have made it an international financial center — a gateway to the world poised to compete in the global economy of the 21st century. For others, Miami is a symbol of unmanaged change, where differences in language and culture point to a future of economic conflict and social division. Regardless of one's view of Miami, few doubt that the image the United States will present to the world in the 21st century will be influenced in no small part by the decisions we make today about immigration.

Options in Brief

Option 1 — Opening Ourselves to the World

The last few years have brought an end to the atmosphere of fear and mistrust that gripped the world for much of this century. The Cold War is over, democracy is triumphant, and a new era of global interaction is dawning. In the world that is emerging, borders will have less significance. Americans can take pride in a heritage that springs from a set of principles promoting openness, tolerance, and diversity. From its earliest days, the United States was a land of opportunity for people outside our borders. Each wave of immigrants contributed to the United States' greatness and enriched our society. Keeping our doors open lets the world know that the United States remains a country that looks forward to tomorrow.

Option 2 — Balancing Our Responsibilities

The United States and the world are facing both serious problems and unprecedented opportunities. In this challenging atmosphere, the United States continues to be an international leader. But we must restore the health of our own society to remain responsible citizens of the world. Problems that plague much of the world's people can be solved only through cooperation between wealthy, developed countries and the poor, developing world. As Americans, we have the ability to help both ourselves and others. Opening our doors to massive immigration, however, resolves no one's problems. The money we spend on settling immigrants should be directed inward toward our own disadvantaged citizens and outward in the form of foreign aid programs that promote responsible, long-term development in Mexico, the Caribbean, and other poor areas.

Option 3 — Competing in a Competitive World

Although the Cold War is over, competition among nations has grown only more intense. We are still a growing country, with enormous resources and human potential, but we have let our competitive edge slip away in the past few decades. Our country requires an immigration policy that fits our overall economic needs. A two-pronged approach makes the most sense. To spur American high-tech industries forward, our doors should be open to scientists and engineers from abroad. To help American factories, farms, and service industries hold down costs, we should allow a limited number of foreigners to work temporarily in low-wage jobs.

Option 4 — Recognizing Our Limits

The world is changing at a breakneck pace. The population explosion in poor countries, the spread of war and chaos, and the age-old curses of hunger and disease plague an ever-growing portion of humanity. We must recognize that Americans can do little to end the misery that haunts much of the world. Simply maintaining our way of life amounts to a major challenge. Although the United States is a nation of immigrants, the arguments supporting massive immigration have long since passed into history. Now it is time to say enough. We should drastically reduce the number of immigrants we accept and commit the resources necessary to take control of our borders.

Option 1

Opening Ourselves to the World

The last few years have brought an end to the atmosphere of fear and mistrust that gripped the world for much of this century. The Cold War is over, democracy is triumphant, and a new era of global interaction is dawning. In the world that is emerging, borders will have less significance. Rather, the movement of people, ideas, and goods will inevitably flow with fewer barriers in an increasingly global community. In the world of the future, the United States will stand out as a shining example. At a time when rigid nationalism has sparked conflict in many countries, Americans can take pride in a heritage that springs from a set of principles promoting openness, tolerance, and diversity. American movies, fashion, and brand names are attractive to people throughout the world because they symbolize a culture that embraces and celebrates many cultures.

From its earliest days, the United States was a land of opportunity for people outside our borders. Each wave of immigrants contributed to the United States' greatness and enriched our society. Today, immigrants are still coming. This latest generation of immigrants contains the best and brightest from a rich variety of cultures and societies. Even those lacking a formal education are driven by a strong sense of initiative and an unshakeable work ethic. They have come because they believe the United States is the land of opportunity. They recognize that the United States rewards hard work and ability like no other country in the world. In the end, the talents, ambitions, and dreams they bring will benefit all Americans. Keeping our doors open lets the world know that the United States remains a country that looks forward to tomorrow.

What policies should we pursue?

- Allow Haitians and others with a legitimate fear of persecution the full protection of U.S. refugee laws.

- Remove bureaucratic obstacles in the immigration process that keep family members apart.

- Adjust immigration laws to permit greater immigration from countries, such as China and Mexico, that have been the victims of unfair restrictions in the past.

- Provide immigrants with more opportunities, job training, and English-language instruction to speed their adjustment to American life.

Lessons from history

The United States has succeeded in integrating wave after wave of immigrants into American society. Fear-mongers in the mid-1800s warned that Irish and German immigrants would bring down the United States. In the early 1900s, similar attacks were directed against newcomers from southern and eastern Europe. In fact, each group of immigrants has made a vital contribution to the overall strength of the United States.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Welcoming new immigrants into our country will inject valuable skills into the U.S. economy and enable American culture to maintain the rich diversity that appeals to consumers the world over.

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2. Renewing the United States' long tradition of offering opportunity and refuge for immigrants will earn the United States respect and admiration from people throughout the world.

3. Immigrants will take advantage of their ties to their native countries to open up new export markets for American products.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. If immigration continues at its current pace, more than 50 million newcomers will flood into the United States in the next half century, overloading our schools, hospitals, and other social services.

2. High levels of immigration will sink our economy by depriving Americans of jobs while forcing government to spend more on the needs of immigrants.

3. Encouraging highly skilled workers to immigrate to the United States robs poor countries of their most valuable human resources.

4. Opening our doors to unskilled immigrants at a time when the U.S. economy offers them few opportunities will only add to our society's problems.

5. High levels of immigration will push U.S. population past tolerable limits and inflict still more harm on our country's environment.

6. The continual arrival of large numbers of immigrants will eventually overwhelm American culture and contribute to the fragmentation of our society.

Option 2

Balancing Our Responsibilities

The United States and the world are facing both serious problems and unprecedented opportunities. The growing populations and struggling economies of poor countries are giving rise to difficult economic and environmental questions that touch all of us. At home, the United States is beset by a troubled educational system, a health care crisis, and increased levels of poverty. At the same time, the end of the Cold War has triggered a democratic revolution that is sweeping the world. As never before, nations throughout the globe recognize the value of working together. In this challenging atmosphere, the United States continues to be an international leader. But we must restore the health of our own society to remain responsible citizens of the world. Problems that plague much of the world's people, such as environmental pollution, unsanitary living conditions, and the spread of AIDS, can be solved only through cooperation between wealthy, developed countries and the poor, developing world.

As Americans, we have the ability to help both ourselves and others. Opening our doors to massive immigration, however, resolves no one's problems. Admitting huge numbers of newcomers into the United States every year not only overburdens our own society, it also drains poor countries of many of their most educated, highly skilled workers. Instead, U.S. immigration policy should address our own shortcomings, as well as take into account the problems affecting our neighbors. The money we spend on settling immigrants should be directed inward toward our own disadvantaged citizens and outward in the form of foreign aid programs that promote responsible, long-term development in Mexico, the Caribbean, and other poor areas that have traditionally looked to the United States for help. By improving life among our neighbors, we can do our part in settling an unsettled world. At the same time, we will be in a position to build a better society here at home.

What policies should we pursue?

- Increase foreign aid to Mexico, the Caribbean, and other struggling areas of the Western Hemisphere to help governments strengthen their economies and reduce the flow of immigration to the United States.

- Apply consistent, humane standards in granting political asylum to refugees, rather than use refugee policy to fight communism.

- Join other developed countries to coordinate the resettlement of existing refugees and prevent future refugee crises.

- Reduce the number of immigration visas awarded annually to 500,000, including refugees.

Lessons from history

The extraordinary changes of the 20th century do not allow us to consider U.S. problems, such as immigration, in isolation from the rest of the world. Since 1900, world population has more than tripled. Technological revolutions in transportation and communications have brought nations into contact like never before. A new category of global problems – environmental pollution, overpopulation, international drug trafficking, AIDS – now affects people throughout the planet. The fast-moving pace of history forces us to address immigration as an issue that involves both the United States and the world as a whole.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Reducing the flow of immigrants to the United States will allow us to address unemployment, health care, poverty, and other problems here at home.

2. Curtailing U.S. immigration and increasing foreign aid will reduce emigration of highly skilled workers from poor countries, thereby improving the prospects for economic development in those areas and slowing the flow of immigration to the United States.

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3. Developing refugee policies that are consistent and humane will bolster the U.S. image throughout the world.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. In the face of huge budget deficits and a sluggish economy, the United States has no money for new foreign aid programs.

2. Considering the soaring population growth and the crippling poverty in much of Latin America and the Caribbean, U.S. foreign aid will do little to reduce the economic pressure that pushes immigrants toward the United States.

3. Closing our own door to immigrants will increase international tension, not improve global harmony.

4. Awarding immigration visas on the basis of humanitarian concerns, rather than economic priorities, will do little to reduce costs for social services.

5. Without high levels of immigration, the United States will lack the talent and energy to strengthen our country and address future problems.

6. Establishing a more open policy toward refugees will encourage millions of desperate people to try to enter the United States.

Option 3

Competing in a Competitive World

Although the Cold War is over, competition among nations has grown only more intense. Economic systems that lag behind, such as that of the Soviet Union, are destined for the dustbin of history. In today's world, the United States must be prepared to compete in an increasingly demanding global marketplace. We are still a growing country, with enormous resources and human potential, but we have let our competitive edge slip away in the past few decades. Industries that were once dominated by American companies — automobiles, electronics, steel — have been lost to foreign competition. Our educational standards have fallen, while costs for health care, welfare, and other social services have ballooned. As the 21st century approaches, we must put our house in order to move forward toward a better tomorrow.

Every country has the right to promote its national interests. The United States should be no different. We cannot afford to admit into our country every year hundreds of thousands of newcomers who will be a burden on our society. Immigration policy should be designed first to serve our country's needs, not to solve the world's problems. The United States remains a strong county, and controlled, responsible immigration can make us still stronger. Our country requires an immigration policy that fits our overall economic needs. A two-pronged approach makes the most sense. To spur American high-tech industries forward, our doors should be open to scientists and engineers from abroad. To help American factories, farms, and service industries hold down costs, we should allow a limited number of foreigners to work temporarily in low-wage jobs. By forging ahead with realistic, far-sighted choices, we can make immigration policy work for the United States.

What policies should we pursue?

- Award 200,000 immigration visas annually for skilled workers, making the advancement of science and technology the top priority in guiding immigration policy.
- Reduce total annual immigration to 400,000, including refugees.
- Allow a limited number of foreigners to work temporarily in the United States in agriculture and other industries facing labor shortages.
- Offer scholarships to foreign graduate students in science, engineering, and other high-tech fields, provided they will work in the United States for at least five years.

Lessons from history

Open immigration policies made sense for the United States as long as there was an abundance of jobs for unskilled workers. The American economy, however, has experienced tremendous change since World War II. New technologies and the movement of low-wage industries outside of the United States have left fewer opportunities for unskilled workers. At the same time, the growth of new high-tech industries in recent decades has left many American companies struggling to find scientists, engineers, and other skilled workers in these emerging fields.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Admitting highly skilled immigrants who are well-suited to the demands of the U.S. economy will help hold down government costs for welfare, health care, and other social services.

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2. Tailoring U.S. immigration policy to the needs of our economy will attract immigrants who have the most to offer to American industry, especially in high-tech fields.

3. Permitting the entry of temporary foreign workers into the labor force will help American industries remain in the United States while competing in the global market.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Limiting immigration to the well-educated discriminates against applicants who have lacked the money or opportunity to educate themselves but possess the drive to succeed.

2. Pursuing an immigration policy that overlooks the concerns of other countries will damage U.S. foreign relations, especially with our neighbors to the south.

3. Drawing the best and brightest skilled workers from poor countries will undercut economic development in much of the world and further international instability.

4. Admitting foreigners as temporary workers will create a new group of second-class citizens with few rights and little stake in American society.

5. Reducing the number of immigration visas available for family reunification will leave many close relatives apart.

6. Assisting foreign graduate students in science and engineering will deprive Americans of jobs and educational opportunities, and leave many of our most important high-tech industries dominated by foreign-born workers.

Option 4

Recognizing Our Limits

The world is changing at a breakneck pace. The population explosion in poor countries, the spread of war and chaos, and the age-old curses of hunger and disease plague an ever-growing portion of humanity. The United States is a strong country, but it cannot solve the world's problems. As the planet's population soars from 5.5 billion today to an estimated 10 billion by the year 2050, we must recognize that Americans can do little to end the misery that haunts much of the world. On the contrary, our sluggish economy has left millions of Americans struggling to keep up. Across the country, government at all levels has failed to keep budgets in balance. Schools are overcrowded and underfunded, while health care costs have skyrocketed. Simply maintaining our way of life amounts to a major challenge.

Although the United States is a nation of immigrants, the arguments supporting massive immigration have long since passed into history. At a time when our country cannot bear the burden of maintaining social services for our own citizens, we can hardly afford to keep the door open every year to hundreds of thousands of newcomers from poor nations. The world's disadvantaged people cannot be blamed for wanting to enter the United States. Many of them lead lives of desperation and hopelessness. But the United States has already given enough. For decades, we have accepted more immigrants than all the other countries of the world combined. Now it is time to say enough. We have the right to preserve American culture that has been created over the past two centuries. We should drastically reduce the number of immigrants we accept and commit the resources necessary to take control of our borders. The threat of runaway change must be brought under control.

What policies should we pursue?

- Reduce the number of immigration visas awarded annually to the level set in 1965 — 290,000 — including refugees.

- Insist that those seeking political asylum apply at U.S. embassies in foreign countries.

- Strengthen border control by tripling the number of Border Patrol agents, constructing impassable barriers at major crossing points along the U.S.-Mexican border, and swiftly deporting foreigners who overstay their tourist visas.

- Introduce a national identity card that all workers would be required to present when applying for employment.

- Pressure the communist government of Cuba, the military junta of Haiti, and other irresponsible neighbors not to trigger mass movements of refugees to the United States.

Lessons from history

The surge in immigration around the turn of the century created dangerous social divisions, especially during tough economic times. During the depression of the 1890s and the economic downturn following World War I, for example, American-born and foreign-born workers often found themselves competing for scarce jobs. Greedy employers frequently hired foreign-born workers to undercut the efforts of labor unions to gain fair wages and better working conditions.

PROS

SUPPORTING ARGUMENTS

1. Reducing immigration will allow government to make progress toward balancing budgets by holding down costs for education, health care, and other social services.

2. Restoring firm control over our borders will help us reduce the flow of drugs into the United States and strengthen our defenses against international terrorism.

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3. Lowering the number of newcomers entering the U.S. labor market will make more jobs available for American workers.

CONS

OPPOSING ARGUMENTS

1. Fencing off our neighbors to the south will spark anti-American feelings in Latin America and the Caribbean, and harm relations with many of our leading trading partners.

2. Closing the door on new immigrants will deprive the American work force of skills, talent, and ambition.

3. Introducing a national identity card will make foreign-born Americans a target for suspicion and discrimination.

4. Drastically reducing immigration will create a society that lacks a solid understanding of the world beyond our borders.

5. Without young immigrants entering the country, American workers will face a heavy burden in supporting the steadily increasing elderly population.

6. Severely cutting back immigration will leave many recently arrived Americans separated from close family members in their native lands.

Five-Day Lesson Plan

Homework: Before beginning the unit, students should read Part I of the background readings (pages 1-4) and complete "Study Guide — Part I."

DAY ONE

Immigration policy in U.S. history

Objective: This discussion activity draws attention to historical attitudes toward immigration and prompts students to consider the relationship between immigration policy and larger questions of national identity.

1. Ask students to imagine that they are preparing brief reports on the distinguishing features of various nations. For example, call on students to brainstorm responses to the question, "What is an Italian, or Japanese, or Saudi Arabian?" Note that these nations are defined largely in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, and culture. How are the responses different from answers to the question, "What is an American?" How has immigration influenced American national identity? Why have immigration patterns set the United States apart even from many of our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere?

2. Instruct students to read "Brief Statement of the Investigations of the Immigration (Dillingham) Commission." Remind them that the commission presented its report to Congress in 1911, following a decade in which immigration was at record levels.

3. Ask students to recall the historical antecedents of the Dillingham Commission report by reviewing "History of Immigration." What prompted Congress to form the commission in 1907? What values are reflected in the report's recommendations? (Note the significance of the underlined phrases.) Why is the report considered a turning point in U.S. immigration policy?

4. Call on students to compare the historical backdrop of the Dillingham Commission against current immigration trends. For example, what do the two eras have in common (e.g., high rates of immigration, debate over the impact of immigrants on American society)? What are the leading differences (e.g., maturation of the U.S. economy, majority of immigrants now coming from Latin America and Asia)? How do the changes in the United States and the world since 1911 shape our perceptions of the commission's recommendations? How have the past 81 years altered our response to the question, "What is an American?"

Homework: Students should read Part II of the background readings (pages 5-11) and complete "Study Guide — Part II."

DAY TWO

Role playing the four options: organization and preparation

Objective: This two-day simulation will familiarize students with leading issues that frame the debate on U.S. immigration policy.

1. Inform students that they will participate in a simulation using the options and the background readings. Form four groups of three to four students. Assign an option to each group. The remainder of the class will serve as members of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees. (In smaller classes, other teachers or administrators may be invited to serve as members of the House subcommittee.)

2. Distribute "Presenting Your Option" to the four option groups and "U.S. Immigration Policy" to the subcommittee. Inform students that each option group will be called upon in Day Three to present the case for its assigned option to the subcommittee. Explain that option groups should follow the instructions in "Presenting Your Option." Note that the option groups should begin by assigning each member a role. (As an extra challenge, ask the groups to design a poster illustrating the best case for their option.) While the option groups are preparing for their presentation, members of the subcommittee should develop cross-examination questions for Day Three (see "U.S. Immigration Policy").

Homework: Students should complete preparations for the simulation.

DAY THREE

Role playing the four options: debate and discussion

1. Organize the room so that the four option groups face a row of desks reserved for the House subcommittee. Distribute "Evaluation Form" to the subcommittee members. Explain that the simulation will begin with three-to-five minute presentations by the spokespersons for the option groups. Encourage spokespersons to speak clearly and convincingly.

2. Following the presentations, invite members of the subcommittee to ask cross-examination questions. Make sure that each subcommittee member has an opportunity to ask at least one question. The questions should be evenly distributed among all four option groups. If time permits, encourage members of the option groups to challenge the positions of the other groups. During cross-examination, allow any option group member to respond. As an alternative approach, permit cross-examination after each option is presented.

3. Instruct members of the subcommittee to fill out the first part of "Evaluation Form" during the course of the period. The second part of the worksheet should be completed as homework.

Homework: Students should read "Introduction to the Final Report of the Select (Hesburgh) Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy."

DAY FOUR

Weighing immigration reform

Objective: This discussion activity will help students evaluate recent changes in U.S. immigration policy.

1. Call on members of the House subcommittee to share their evaluations of the option groups. Which arguments were most convincing? Which beliefs were most appealing? How do the assumptions of the Hesburgh Commission compare to those of the options? (Explain that, much as the Dillingham Commission had guided immigration policy seventy years earlier, the 1981 Hesburgh Commission influenced the immigration reform acts of 1986 and 1990.) Which of the options most closely reflects the commission's worldview?

2. Read the following summary of the Hesburgh Commission's recommendations: *"We recommend closing the back door to undocumented/illegal migration, opening the front door a little more to accommodate legal migration in the interests of this country, defining our immigration goals clearly and providing a structure to implement them effectively, and setting forth procedures which will lead to fair and efficient adjudication and administration of U.S. immigration laws."*

Are the recommendations of the Hesburgh Commission justified by the report's assumptions? (Note the

significance of the underlined phrases.) Has the United States succeeded in implementing the commission's recommendations? How would the commission's report be different if it were being prepared today?

Homework: Students should read each of the four options, then fill out "Focusing Your Thoughts," and complete "Your Option Five."

DAY FIVE

Looking into the future

Objective: This exercise will allow students to assess the impact of their options on the future course of the United States.

1. Review the beliefs in "Focusing Your Thoughts," noting the relationship between beliefs and policy options. Call on students to explain how their beliefs guided their responses in "Your Option Five."

2. Distribute "The Future of U.S. Immigration – 1992-2050." Emphasize that immigration policies adopted today will greatly influence the development of the United States over the next 58 years. After students read the instructions, call on them to explain how their options would affect the areas mentioned in the worksheet. Encourage students to distinguish differences among the options they have crafted. How do the options reflect contrasting views about where the United States is headed?

3. *Extra Challenge:* As homework, instruct students to write a brief essay on their proposals for immigration policy. In the first part of the essay, students should summarize their responses to "Your Option Five," while in the second part they should assess the impact of their option on the United States over the next six decades. Suggest that students send their essays to the president, the editor of a local newspaper, or a member of Congress.

Name: _____

Study Guide — Part I

The Role of Immigration in the American Experience

1. Why was the United States a magnet for immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries?

2. Why did U.S. lawmakers not feel the need to begin restricting immigration until 1875?

3. What factors prompted Congress to pass laws restricting immigration in 1917, 1921, and 1924?

4. How were changes in U.S. foreign policy after World War II reflected in U.S. immigration policy?

5. Why is the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 considered a major turning point in U.S. immigration law?

Name: _____

Study Guide – Part II

Emerging Issues in U.S. Immigration Policy

1. Why are Daniel Alvarez and Vuong Khoa in many ways typical of the immigrants who have entered the United States since 1965?

2. Why has the issue of illegal aliens gained increased attention in recent years?

3. Why is U.S. policy toward illegal aliens often viewed as a foreign policy issue?

4. Why has pressure for change in U.S. refugee policy increased since the end of the Cold War?

5. Summarize the case for setting relatively low levels of immigration.

6. Summarize the case for setting relatively high levels of immigration.

Brief Statement of the Investigations of the Immigration (Dillingham) Commission, 1911
Recommendations

As a result of the investigation the Commission is unanimously of the opinion that in framing legislation emphasis should be laid upon the following principles:

1. While the American people, as in the past, welcome the oppressed of other lands, care should be taken that immigration be such both in quality and quantity as not to make too difficult the process of assimilation.

2. Since the existing law and further special legislation recommended in this report deal with the physically and morally unfit, further general legislation concerning the admission of aliens should be based primarily upon economic or business considerations touching the prosperity and economic well-being of our people.

3. The measure of the rational, healthy development of a country is not the extent of its investment of capital, its output of products, or its exports and imports, unless there is a corresponding economic opportunity afforded to the citizen dependent upon employment for his material, mental, and moral development.

4. The development of business may be brought about by means which lower the standard of living of the wage earners. A slow expansion of industry which would permit the adaptation and assimilation of the incoming labor supply is preferable to a very rapid industrial expansion which results in the immigration of laborers of low standards and efficiency, who imperil the American standard of wages and conditions of employment.

The Commission agrees that:...

The investigations of the Commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, a condition which demands legislation restricting the further admission of such unskilled labor.

It is desirable in making the restriction that—
(a) A sufficient number be debarred to produce a marked effect upon the present supply of unskilled labor.
(b) As far as possible, the aliens excluded should be those who come to this country with no intention to become American citizens or even to maintain a permanent residence here, but merely to save enough, by the adoption, if necessary, of low standards of living, to return permanently to their home country. Such persons are usually men unaccompanied by wives and children.
(c) As far as possible the aliens excluded should also be those who, by reason of their personal qualities or habits, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens.

The following methods of restricting immigration have been suggested:
(a) The exclusion of those unable to read or write in some language.
(b) The limitation of the number of each race arriving each year to a certain percentage of the average of that race arriving during a given period of years.
(c) The exclusion of unskilled laborers unaccompanied by wives or families.
(d) The limitation of the number of immigrants arriving annually at any port.
(e) The material increase in the amount of money required to be in the possession of the immigrant at the port of arrival.
(f) The material increase of the head tax.
(g) The levy of the head tax so as to make a marked discrimination in favor of men with families.

All these methods would be effective in one way or another in securing restrictions in a greater or less degree. A majority of the Commission favor the reading and writing test as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration.

Presenting Your Option

Day One – Preparing Your Presentation

Your Assignment: Your group has been called upon to appear before the Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees of the House of Representatives. Your assignment is to persuade the subcommittee members that your option should be the basis for U.S. policy. You will be judged on how well you present your option.

Organizing Your Group: Each member of your group will take a specific role. Below is a brief explanation of the responsibilities for each role.

1. *Spokesperson:* Your job is to explain the option of your group to the House Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees in a three-to-five minute presentation. In preparing your presentation, you will receive help from the other members of your group. You should include arguments from their areas of expertise. Keep in mind, though, that you are expected to take the lead in organizing your group. Read your option and review the background readings to build a strong case for your option.

2. *Domestic Policy Analyst:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on how your option would improve the lives of Americans here at home. Carefully read your option and then review the sections of the background readings that deal with your area of expertise. Pay special attention to "Emerging Issues in U.S. Immigration Policy."

3. *Foreign Policy Analyst:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on how your option would address our international interests. Carefully read your option and then review the sections of the background readings that deal with your area of expertise. Pay special attention to "Emerging Issues in U.S. Immigration Policy."

4. *Historian:* Your job is to advise the spokesperson of your group on how the lessons of history support your option. Carefully read your option, and then review the sections of the background readings that deal with your area of expertise. Pay special attention to "The Role of Immigration in the American Experience."

Day Two – Making Your Case

On Day Two, your spokesperson will deliver a three-to-five minute presentation to the House Subcommittee on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees. Notes may be used, but the spokesperson should speak clearly and convincingly. During the other presentations, you should take notes to prepare challenging cross-examination questions. After all of the groups have presented their options, members of the subcommittee will have the first opportunity to ask cross-examination questions. Any member of your group may respond during the cross-examination period. If time permits, your teacher may also allow you to challenge other option groups with your cross-examination questions.

U.S. Immigration Policy

Subcommittee of the House of Representatives on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees

Your Role

You serve on a subcommittee that crafts immigration policy for the U.S. Congress. As you know, U.S. immigration policy has undergone substantial revision in the past few years and continues to spark controversy. The rapid pace of change on the international scene and new challenges here at home require that you constantly re-evaluate our country's immigration policy. As a subcommittee member, you are called upon in the course of these hearings to consider four distinct approaches to U.S. immigration policy in deciding what is in the best interests of our country.

Your Assignment

While the four option groups are organizing their presentations, you should prepare two questions regarding each of the options. You may develop your questions with another member of the subcommittee. Your teacher will collect these questions at the end of the exercise.

Your questions should be challenging and critical. For example, a good question for Option 1 might be:

> *If the United States adopts Option 1, how would our country's ability to compete in the global economy be affected?*

After all four option groups have completed their presentations, your teacher will call on you and your fellow subcommittee members to ask questions. The Evaluation Form is designed for you to record your impressions of the option groups. Part I should be filled out in class after the option groups make their presentations. Part II should be completed as homework. After this activity is concluded, you may be called upon to explain your evaluation of the option groups.

Center for Foreign Policy Development *Permission granted for duplication*

Name: _____

Evaluation Form

Subcommittee of the House of Representatives on International Law, Immigration, and Refugees

Part I

What was the most persuasive argument presented in favor of this option?	What was the most persuasive argument presented against this option?
Option 1	*Option 1*
Option 2	*Option 2*
Option 3	*Option 3*
Option 4	*Option 4*

Part II

Which group presented its option most effectively? Explain your answer.

Introduction to the Final Report of the Select (Hesburgh) Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?"

Hillel, *Sayings of the Fathers 1:14*

Our history is largely the story of immigration. Even the Indians were immigrants. The ancestors of all other Americans — when measured in terms of world history — came here only yesterday.

As a refuge and a land of opportunity, the United States remains the world's number one magnet. This fact reaffirms the faith of our founding fathers and the central values we have adopted as a nation — freedom, equality under the law, opportunity and respect for diversity. Throughout our history, our leaders have seen in immigration the articulation of these deeply held and religiously based values. President Ronald W. Reagan, in his speech accepting the Republican nomination for the presidency, reminded us of that fact when he said:

> "I ask you to trust that American spirit which knows no ethnic, religious, social, political, regional or economic boundaries: the spirit that burned with zeal in the hearts of millions of immigrants from every corner of the earth who came here in search of freedom..."

Then, examining the events of the recent past, the President asked:

> "Can we doubt that only a divine Providence placed this land — this island of freedom here as a refuge for all those people in the world who yearn to breathe free? Jews and Christians enduring persecution behind the Iron Curtain, the boat people of Southeast Asia, Cuba, and Haiti, the victims of drought and famine in Africa, and freedom fighters in Afghanistan and our countrymen held in savage captivity."

Letters and oral testimony to the Select Commission affirm the continuing vitality of President Reagan's characterization of the United States as a land of opportunity and as a beacon of liberty for immigrants. We have listened carefully to these moving voices, but we have also been faced with the reality of limitations on immigration. If it is a truism to say that the United States is a nation of immigrants, it is also a truism that it is one no longer, nor can it become a land of unlimited immigration. As important as immigration has been and remains to our country, it is no longer possible to say as George Washington did that we welcome all of the oppressed of the world, or as did the poet, Emma Lazarus, that we should take all of the huddled masses yearning to be free.

The United States of America — no matter how powerful and idealistic — cannot by itself solve the problems of world migration. This nation must continue to have some limits on immigration. Our policy — while providing opportunity to a portion of the world's population — must be guided by basic national interests of the people of the United States....

The United States and the World

In emphasizing that our recommendations must be consistent with U.S. national interests, we are aware of the fact that we live in a shrinking, interdependent world and that world economic and political forces result in the migration of peoples. We also are aware of how inadequately the world is organized to deal with the dislocations that occur as a result of such migrations. None of the great international issues of our time — arms control, energy, food or migration — can be solved entirely within the framework of a nation-state world. Certainly, there is no unilateral U.S. solution to any of these problems; we must work with a world organized along nation-state lines and with existing international organizations. As a nation responsible for the destiny of its people and their descendants, we can better deal with these problems by working with other nations to build

more effective international mechanisms. That is why we begin our recommendations with a call for a new emphasis on internationalizing world migration issues. Since many, large-scale, international migrations are caused by war, poverty and persecution within sending nations, it is in the national interests of the United States to work with other nations to prevent or ameliorate those conditions....

Immigration and National Interest

To the question: Is immigration in the U.S. national interest?, the Select Commission gives a strong but qualified yes. A strong yes because we believe there are many benefits which immigrants bring to U.S. society; a qualified yes because we believe there are limits on the ability of this country to absorb large numbers of immigrants effectively. Our work during the past 19 months has confirmed the continuing value of accepting immigrants and refugees to the United States, in addition to the humanitarian purpose served. The research findings are clear: Immigrants, refugees and their children work hard and contribute to the economic well-being of our society; strengthen our social security system and manpower capability; strengthen our ties with other nations; increase our language and cultural resources and powerfully demonstrate to the world that the United States is an open and free society....

But even though immigration is good for this country, the Commission has rejected the arguments of many economists, ethnic groups and religious leaders for a greater expansion in the number of immigrants and refugees to be accepted by the United States. Many of those in favor of expanded immigration have argued that the United States is capable of absorbing far greater numbers of immigrants than are now admitted. They contend that:

- The United States has the lowest population density of any wealthy, industrial nation in the world, with the exceptions of Canada and Australia; and

- The United States, with only six percent of the world's population, still accounts for 25 percent of the world's gross national product.

They further point out that the United States faces serious labor shortages in the decade to come, particularly of young and middle-aged workers. Greatly expanded immigration, they believe, will go a long way towards providing needed workers.

Religious leaders have presented some of these same arguments from a relatively different perspective. They, too, note the vast resources and relatively low population density of the United States, but argue that this nation has a humanitarian responsibility to provide immigration opportunities to those seeking entry on the basis of family reunification or as refugees. They wish the United States to preserve its role as a country of large-scale immigration, despite fears about the entry of the foreign-born.

Historians, in their support of increased immigration, have cautioned against overly restrictionist tendencies. They point out that U.S. citizens have always been concerned about the arrival of immigrants, but note that immigrants have always made contributions to U.S. society. These scholars also state that the proportion of foreign-born citizens in the United States is now at an all-time low since 1850, when the government began to keep such statistics. If immigration did no harm to U.S. society when foreign-born citizens accounted for 14 to 15 percent of the population, they argue it would certainly cause no internal problems now....

Questions for consideration

1. According to the report, how is immigration tied to our overall vision of the U.S. role in the world?

2. Why do you think the report summarizes a number of arguments in favor of immigration?

3. Judging from the tone of the report, what recommendations do you think the commission offered regarding U.S. immigration policy?

Focusing Your Thoughts

Instructions: You have had an opportunity to consider four options on U.S. immigration policy. Now it is your turn to look at each of the options from your own perspective. Try each one on for size. Think about how the options address your concerns and hopes. You will find that each has its own risks and trade-offs, advantages and disadvantages.

Beliefs

Considering the statements below will help you answer the first three questions of "Your Option Five." Rate each of them according to your personal beliefs:

1 = Strongly Support
2 = Support
3 = Oppose
4 = Strongly Oppose
5 = Undecided

___ In the end, U.S. foreign policy should be based on a realistic assessment of our national interest, not on idealistic plans for saving the world.

___ As the most powerful nation in the world, the United States is capable of addressing international suffering while helping the disadvantaged here at home.

___ The problems affecting most poor countries are only going to get worse, regardless of U.S. foreign aid programs.

___ The United States must remain a symbol of hope and opportunity for the people of the world.

___ Americans will face a struggle in the coming decades just to maintain our present lifestyle.

___ The greatness of the United States is based on its diversity and openness to fresh ideas.

___ The United States cannot isolate itself from problems beyond our borders.

___ Our country's ability to compete in the global economy will determine the fate of the United States in the coming century.

Ranking the Options

Which of the options below do you prefer? Keep in mind that the beliefs you support most strongly should guide your choice. Rank the options, with "1" being the best option for the United States to follow.

___ **Option 1: Opening Ourselves to the World**

___ **Option 2: Balancing Our Responsibilities**

___ **Option 3: Competing in a Competitive World**

___ **Option 4: Recognizing Our Limits**

Creating Your Own Option

Your assignment is to create an option that reflects your own beliefs and opinions. You may borrow heavily from one option, or you may combine ideas from two or three options. Or you may take a new approach altogether. There are, of course, no perfect solutions. And there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, you should strive to craft an option that is logical and persuasive. The "Your Option Five" worksheet will help you organize your ideas.

Name: _____

Your Option Five

1. How many immigrants, including refugees, should the United States allow to enter the country every year? Explain the basis of your decision.

2. How should the United States decide which applicants for immigration are admitted into the country?

3. How should the United States deal with the issue of illegal aliens?

4. What image of the United States does your option project to the rest of the world?

5. What are the two strongest arguments opposing your option?

   A.

   B.

6. What are the two strongest arguments supporting your option?

   A.

   B.

Name: _____

The Future of Immigration — 1992-2050

Instructions: Now that you have had an opportunity to develop your own option for U.S. immigration policy, consider the impact your recommendations will have on the future of the United States. Imagine the year is 2050. How will your option have influenced the following areas?

1. The economy:

2. Population and the environment:

3. Foreign policy:

4. Border control:

5. Social service costs:

6. Stability in Mexico and the Caribbean:

Topics for Further Consideration

Salad bowl vs. melting pot: The debate over immigration policy forces us to confront basic questions about the nature of American society. Until the 1960s, the great majority of Americans accepted the notion that the United States was a "melting pot" – a term first popularized by a sympathetic French diplomat at the time of the American Revolutionary War. Since the civil rights movement, however, many racial and ethnic groups have drawn greater attention to their cultural uniqueness. In contrast to the assimilation envisioned by the "melting pot," they prefer to view the United States as a "salad bowl," where each ingredient contributes to the flavor of the whole while retaining its distinctiveness. How valid are these two metaphors in describing American society, both today and in the past? What forces facilitate assimilation? What forces preserve distinctions?

Minority group rights: Throughout much of the world, an individual's role in society is defined under law by his or her ethnicity, religion, or caste. The Lebanese civil war, for example, was fought in part over a parliamentary system that apportioned political power to the country's various religious communities. Demographic changes after the system's inception in 1943 spurred Muslims, especially the rapidly increasing Shi'ite community, to demand a greater share of power from the politically dominant Christians. In contrast, in the United States, the rights of the individual have overshadowed group rights. Recent decades, however, have witnessed the development of affirmative action programs aimed specifically at minority groups. Critics of affirmative action have argued that such programs contribute to the fragmentation of society. Should members of minority groups, especially those that have suffered persecution, benefit from affirmative action? Should government officials pay greater attention to the concerns of minority groups as they make decisions about the allocation of public resources and political influence? Could the United States be vulnerable to the centrifugal forces that pulled Lebanon apart?

Bilingual education: In many cities with large immigrant populations, school officials have set up bilingual education programs for students who are not proficient in English. Los Angeles schools, for example, offer bilingual classes not only in Spanish, but also in Korean, Armenian, Cantonese, Filipino, Farsi, and Japanese as well. Although the merits of bilingual classes generally are weighed in the context of education, the debate is a key part of the larger issue involving the acculturation of immigrants into American society. Does bilingual education, as critics have charged, threaten to undermine the linguistic homogeneity of the United States? Should bilingual education be used as a tool for teaching English-speaking students another language? How does access, or lack of access, to bilingual education programs affect the attitudes of immigrants toward their adopted country? What role should government play to facilitate the integration of immigrants into American society?

Immigration and racism: The Bush administration's efforts to stem the flow of Haitians seeking refuge in the United States have prompted critics to label U.S. immigration policy as racist. They charge that some U.S. officials view non-whites as less able to assimilate into American society than are whites. Indeed, the history of immigration -- from the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act to the Immigration and Naturalization Service's "Operation Wetback" in 1954 -- is tarnished by explicit racism. The report of the 1911 Dillingham Commission was driven largely by a desire to maintain the dominance of Americans who traced their origins to northwestern Europe. Were these fears regarding the impact of immigrants on American culture justified? Should Americans today be concerned that most immigrants entering the United States come from Latin America and Asia? How would students feel if they were Native Americans facing European immigration in the 1600s?

Birthright citizenship: The 14th amendment, ratified in 1868, clearly granted citizenship to anyone born in the United States. At the time, the amendment was intended to clarify the status of African-Americans. The principle of birthright citizenship, however, has been subject to re-assessment lately. The growth of the welfare state has made U.S. citizenship more valuable than ever, while the boom in international travel and the rise in illegal immigration has brought greater numbers of foreigners, including pregnant women, into the United States. Should the United States abandon the principle of birthright citizenship and develop more stringent citizenship laws in line with those in much of Europe and Japan? What arguments support the retention of birthright citizenship?

***Excerpts from the* Brief Statement of the Investigations of the Immigration Commission, with Conclusions and Recommendations and Views of the Minority, chaired by Sen. William P. Dillingham of Vermont, 1911**

Conclusions

While it has been no part of the work of the Commission to enforce the provisions of the immigration laws, it has been thought best to furnish from time to time to the proper authorities such information acquired in the course of the investigation as could further good administration and the enforcement of the law. City, state, and federal officials have officially recognized such assistance in their attempts to control the so-called "white slave trade," in the proper regulation of the immigrant societies and homes, in securing evidence and penal certificates to accomplish the deportation of criminals, and in the administration of the Chinese-exclusion act. In some instances, such information has led to local reorganization of the immigrant service. While mention is made of this matter the real work of the Commission has consisted in the collection and preparation of new material, largely statistical in nature, which might form a basis on which to frame legislation. A very condensed summary of the results on some of the principal questions investigated follows.

Sources of Immigration and Character of Immigrants

From 1820 to June 30, 1910, 27,918,992 immigrants were admitted to the United States. Of this number 92.3 per cent came from European countries, which countries are the source of about 93.7 per cent of the present immigration movement. From 1820 to 1883 more than 95 per cent of the total immigration from Europe originated in the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. In what follows the movement from these countries will be referred to as the "old immigration." Following 1883 there was a rapid change in the ethnical character of European immigration, and in recent years more than 70 per cent of the movement has originated in southern and eastern Europe. The change geographically, however, has been somewhat greater than the change in the racial character of the immigration, this being due very largely to the number of Germans who have come from Austria-Hungary and Russia. The movement from southern and eastern Europe will be referred to as the "new immigration." In a single generation Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Russia have succeeded the United Kingdom and Germany as the chief sources of immigration. In fact, each of the three countries first named furnished more immigrants to the United States in 1907 than came in the same year from the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland combined.

The old immigration movement in recent years has rapidly declined, both numerically and relatively, and under present conditions there are no indications that it will materially increase. The new immigration movement is very large, and there are few, if any, indications of its natural abatement. The new immigration, coming in such large numbers, has provoked a widespread feeling of apprehension as to its effect on the economic and social welfare of the country. Because of this the Commission's investigations have been mainly directed toward a study of its general status as part of the population of the country.

The old immigration movement was essentially one of permanent settlers. The new immigration is very largely one of individuals a considerable proportion of whom apparently have no intention of permanently changing their residence, their only purpose in coming to America being to temporarily take advantage of the greater wages paid for industrial labor in this country. This, of course, is not true of all the new immigrants, but the practice is sufficiently common to warrant referring to it as a characteristic of them as a class. From all data that are available it appears that nearly 40 per cent of the new immigration movement returns to Europe and that about two-thirds of those who go remain there. This does not mean that all of these immigrants have acquired a competence and returned to live on it. Among the immigrants who return permanently are those who have failed, as well as those who have succeeded. Thousands of those returning have, under unusual conditions of climate, work, and food, contracted tuberculosis and other diseases;

others are injured in our industries; still others are the widows and children of aliens dying here. These, with the aged and the temperamentally unfit, make up a large part of the aliens who return to their former homes to remain.

The old immigration came to the United States during a period of general development and was an important factor in that development, while the new immigration has come during a period of great industrial expansion and has furnished a practically unlimited supply of labor to that expansion.

As a class the new immigrants are largely unskilled laborers coming from countries where their highest wage is small compared with the lowest wage in the United States. Nearly 75 per cent of them are males. About 83 per cent are between the ages of 14 and 45 years, and consequently are producers rather than dependents. They bring little money into the country and send or take a considerable part of their earnings out. More than 35 per cent are illiterate, as compared with less than 3 per cent of the old immigrant class. Immigration prior to 1882 was practically unregulated, and consequently many were not self-supporting, so that the care of alien paupers in several States was a serious problem. The new immigration has for the most part been carefully regulated so far as health and likelihood of pauperism are concerned, and, although drawn from classes low in the economic scale, the new immigrants as a rule are the strongest, the most enterprising, and the best of their class....

Immigration and Crime

It is impossible from existing data to determine whether the immigrant population in this country is relatively more or less criminal than the native-born population. Statistics show that the proportion of convictions for crimes according to the population is greater among the foreign-born than among the native-born. It must be remembered, however, that the proportion of persons of what may be termed the criminal age is greater among the foreign-born than among the natives, and when due allowance is made for this fact it appears that criminality, judged by convictions, is about equally prevalent in each class. It is obviously impossible to determine whether the proportion of unpunished criminals is relatively greater among the foreign or among the native born. It is sometimes stated that the detection and conviction of criminals, especially for higher crimes, is more difficult in the case of the foreign-born. Probably this is true of certain localities and perhaps generally true in the case of certain nationalities, but there is no proof that this condition applies to the foreign-born element as a whole in the country at large. It is possible that in some localities prejudice against or sympathy for foreigners influences convictions or acquittals. In large cities a part of the apparent criminality of the foreign-born consists merely of violations of ordinances, which are offenses only because the persons who commit them are not naturalized. Prominent in this class of offenses is street peddling without a license in cities where such licenses are granted only to citizens.

The proportion of the more serious crimes of homicide, blackmail, and robbery, as well as the least serious offenses, is greater among the foreign-born. The disproportion in this regard is due principally to the prevalence of homicides and other crimes of personal violence among Italians and to the violation of city ordinances previously mentioned.

The United States immigration law provides for the exclusion of persons who have been convicted of or who admit having committed a crime involving moral turpitude, but notwithstanding this a considerable number of aliens of the following classes succeed in entering the United States:

1. Those who have been convicted of crime abroad and have served out their sentence.
2. Those who have been convicted of crime by foreign courts during their absence from the place of trial, having escaped arrest and fled the country.

Besides these our law does not exclude those who are regarded at home as dangerous or suspicious persons or probable criminals.

There are two fundamental defects in the law relative to the immigration of criminal aliens. In the first place no adequate provision is made for securing a knowledge of the criminal record of aliens in other countries, and the inspection at United States ports that is largely depended upon for the detection of arriving aliens of the criminal class is in the nature of the case entirely inadequate to control the movement. As previously explained, in the case of Italy, advantage is not taken of the only instance in

which arriving immigrants bring with them any written evidence as to their moral character at home.

The other serious, and in the opinion of the Commission inexcusable, defect is the fact that aliens admitted to this country, unless it appears that such admission was in violation of law, may pursue a criminal career without danger of deportation. To deport an alien of any class is entirely within the rights of any Government, and provision should be made for ridding the United States of aliens who, within a relatively short time after arrival, become criminals. It seems entirely reasonable and just that this country should not harbor dangerous criminals of another country, especially when their residence in the United States has been so brief that their tendency to crime can not be attributed to conditions arising subsequent to their entry into this country. Under the Canadian immigration law aliens who become a charge upon the public, by reason of crime or any other cause, within three years after their arrival may be, and in considerable numbers are, deported to the countries whence they came. Under the British aliens act the right to deport criminals is exercised, and the Commission emphatically believes that the same principle should be applied in the United States. It is not believed that the practice of deportation should be sufficiently extended to include minor offenses, nor that the period of time within which deportation could be made should be longer than the period required for naturalization.

Immigration and the Public Health

The effective administration of the present immigration law insures the admission to the United States of physically healthy immigrants, so that there is no adequate cause for concern in this regard. While it is true that a large part of the present-day immigration is drawn from countries where certain dangerous and loathsome contagious diseases are prevalent among the immigration classes, the medical inspection conducted by the steamship companies at foreign ports of embarkation and elsewhere in Europe prevents the coming to this country of great numbers of diseased aliens, and the inspection here by officers of the United States Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service effectively supplements the examination abroad.

It is doubtless true that some cases of contagious or infectious disease are introduced, and to a limited extent spread, in this country because of immigration, but there is no cause for serious alarm in this regard. From investigations of the Commission in industrial localities and from other investigations that have been made it seems probable that a considerable number of persons afflicted with venereal diseases are admitted to this country and that such diseases have been spread in many communities as a result of immigration. It is difficult always to detect the existence of such diseases by means of a medical inspection as it is now conducted at United States ports, and it would seem impracticable to make the medical examination more thorough in this regard than it is at the present time.

The Commission included within the scope of the investigation the study of cases admitted to Bellevue and Allied Hospitals in New York City. These hospitals are public charitable institutions, and a sufficient number of persons are treated there to warrant some conclusions relative to the existence of disease among the poorer classes of the foreign-born. While it appears that a considerable number of immigrants are treated at these hospitals for various causes within a comparatively short time after their admission to the United States, it does not appear that the number is sufficiently serious to warrant the conclusion that diseased persons are being admitted in any considerable numbers. A study of these cases, however, permits an interesting and significant comparison between immigrants of the old and the new class with regard to alcoholism. Of the 23,758 cases treated at Bellevue and Allied Hospitals during the period covered by the Commission's inquiry, 25.5 per cent of the native-born and 18.2 per cent of the foreign-born persons involved were treated for alcoholism. Among the foreign-born this treatment was confined almost entirely to the races of the old immigration, such as the Irish, Scotch, English, and Germans, while relatively very few southern and eastern Europeans were treated for that cause. A striking difference between the old and new immigration in this regard was also apparent to a greater or less degree in many industrial communities included in the Commission's general investigation. Some complaint was made that drunkenness interfered with the industrial efficiency of some southern and eastern Europeans, but these cases were comparatively rare....

Immigrants in Manufacturing and Mining

A large proportion of the southern and eastern European immigrants of the past twenty-five years have entered the manufacturing and mining industries of the eastern and middle western States, mostly in the capacity of unskilled laborers. There is no basic industry in which they are not largely represented and in many cases they compose more than 50 per cent of the total number of persons employed in such industries. Coincident with the advent of these millions of unskilled laborers there has been an unprecedented expansion of the industries in which they have been employed. Whether this great immigration movement was caused by the industrial development or whether the fact that a practically unlimited and available supply of cheap labor existed in Europe was taken advantage of for the purpose of expanding the industries, can not well be demonstrated. Whatever may be the truth in this regard it is certain that southern and eastern European immigrants have almost completely monopolized unskilled labor activities in many of the more important industries. This phase of the industrial situation was made the most important and exhaustive feature of the Commission's investigation, and the results show that while the competition of these immigrants has had little, if any, effect on the highly skilled trades, nevertheless, through lack of industrial progress and by reason of large and constant reinforcement from abroad, it has kept conditions in the semiskilled and unskilled occupations from advancing.

Several elements peculiar to the new immigrants contributed to this result. The aliens came from countries where low economic conditions prevailed and where conditions of labor were bad. They were content to accept wages and conditions which the native American and immigrants of the older class had come to regard as unsatisfactory. They were not, as a rule, engaged at lower wages than had been paid to older workmen for the same class of labor, but their presence in constantly increasing numbers prevented progress among the older wage-earning class, and as a result that class of employees was gradually displaced. An instance of this displacement is shown in the experience of the bituminous coal mines of western Pennsylvania. This section of the bituminous field was the one first entered by the new immigrants, and the displacement of the old workers was soon under way. Some of them entered other occupations and many of them migrated to the coal fields of the Middle West. Later these fields also were invaded by the new immigrants, and large numbers of the old workers again migrated to the mines of the Southwest, where they still predominate. The effect of the new immigration is clearly shown in the western Pennsylvania fields, where the average wage of the bituminous coal worker is 42 cents a day below the average wage in the Middle West and Southwest. Incidentally, hours of labor are longer and general working conditions poorer in the Pennsylvania mines than elsewhere. Another characteristic of the new immigrants contributed to the situation in Pennsylvania. This was the impossibility of successfully organizing them into labor unions. Several attempts at organization were made, but the constant influx of immigrants to whom prevailing conditions seemed unusually favorable contributed to the failure to organize. A similar situation has prevailed in other great industries.

Like most of the immigration from southern and eastern Europe, those who entered the leading industries were largely single men or married men unaccompanied by their families. There is, of course, in practically all industrial communities a large number of families of the various races, but the majority of the employees are men without families here and whose standard of living is so far below that of the native American or older immigrant workman that it is impossible for the latter to successfully compete with them. They usually live in cooperative groups and crowd together. Consequently, they are able to save a great part of their earnings, much of which is sent or carried abroad. Moreover, there is a strong tendency on the part of these unaccompanied men to return to their native countries after a few years of labor here. These groups have little contact with American life, learn little of American institutions, and aside from the wages earned profit little by their stay in this country. During their early years in the United States they usually rely for assistance and advice on some member of their race, frequently a saloon keeper or grocer, and almost always a steamship ticket agent and "immigrant banker," who, because of superior intelligence and better knowledge of American ways, commands their confidence. Usually after a longer residence they become more self-reliant, but their progress toward assimilation is generally slow.

Immigrant families in the industrial centers are more permanent and usually exhibit a stronger tendency toward advancement, although, in most cases, it is a long time before they even approach the ordinary standard of the American or the older immigrant families in the same grade of occupation. This description, of course, is not universally true, but it represents a great part of the recent immigrant population in the United States. Their numbers are so great and the influx is so continuous that even with the remarkable expansion of industry during the past few years there has been created an over supply of unskilled labor, and in some of the industries this is reflected in a curtailed number of working days and a consequent yearly income among the unskilled workers which is very much less than is indicated by the daily wage rates paid; and while it may not have lowered in a marked degree the American standard of living, it has introduced a lower standard which has become prevalent in the unskilled industry at large....

Recommendations

The Commission agrees that:

1. To protect the United States more effectively against the immigration of criminal and certain other debarred classes—

(a) Aliens convicted of serious crimes within a period of five years after admission should be deported in accordance with the provisions of House bill 20980, Sixty-first Congress, second session.

(b) Under the provisions of section 39 of the immigration act of February 20, 1907, the President should appoint commissioners to make arrangements with such countries as have adequate police records to supply emigrants with copies of such records, and that thereafter immigrants from such countries should be admitted to the United States only upon the production of proper certificates showing an absence of convictions for excludable crimes.

(c) So far as practicable, the immigration laws should be so amended as to be made applicable to alien seamen.

(d) Any alien who becomes a public charge within three years after his arrival in this country should be subject to deportation in the discretion of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor.

2. Sufficient appropriation should be regularly made to enforce vigorously the provisions of the laws previously recommended by the Commission and enacted by Congress regarding the importation of women for immoral purposes.

3. As the new statute relative to steerage conditions took effect so recently as January 1, 1909, and as the most modern steerage fully complies with all that is demanded under law, the Commission's only recommendation in this connection is that a statute be immediately enacted providing for the placing of Government officials, both men and women, on vessels carrying third-class or steerage passengers for the enforcement of the law and the protection of the immigrant. The system inaugurated by the Commission of sending investigators in the steerage in the guise of immigrants should be continued at intervals by the Bureau of Immigration.

4. To strengthen the certainty of just and humane decisions of doubtful cases at ports of entry it is recommended—

That section 25 of the immigration act of 1907 be amended to provide that boards of special inquiry should be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, and that they should be composed of men whose ability and training qualify them for the performance of judicial functions; that the provisions compelling their hearings to be separate and apart from the public should be repealed, and that the office of an additional Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor to assist in reviewing such appeals be created.

5. To protect the immigrant against exploitation; to discourage sending savings abroad; to encourage permanent residence and naturalization; and to secure better distribution of alien immigrants throughout the country—

(a) The States should enact laws strictly regulating immigrant banks.

(b) Proper State legislation should be enacted for the regulation of employment agencies.

(c) Since numerous aliens make it their business to keep immigrants from influences that may tend toward their assimilation and naturalization as American citizens with the purpose of using their funds, and of encouraging investment of their savings abroad and their return to their home land, aliens who attempt to persuade immigrants not to become American citizens should be made subject to deportation.

(d) Since the distribution of the thrifty immigrant to sections of the country where he may secure a permanent residence to the best advantage, and especially where he may invest his savings in farms or engage in agricultural pursuits, is most desirable, the Division of Information, in the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, should be so conducted as to cooperate with States desiring immigrant settlers; and information concerning the opportunities for settlement should be brought to the attention of immigrants in industrial centers who have been here for some time and who might be thus induced to invest their savings in this country and become permanent agricultural settlers. The division might also secure and furnish to all laborers alike information showing opportunities for permanent employment in various sections of the country, together with the economic conditions in such places.

6. One of the provisions of section 2 of the act of 1907 reads as follows:

> *And provided further,* That skilled labor may be imported if labor of like kind unemployed can not be found in this country.

Instances occasionally arise, especially in the establishment of new industries in the United States, where labor of the kind desired, unemployed, can not be found in this country and it becomes necessary to import such labor. Under the law the Secretary of Commerce and Labor has no authority to determine the question of the necessity for importing such labor in advance of the importation, and it is recommended that an amendment to the law be adopted by adding to the clause cited above a provision to the effect that the question of the necessity of importing such skilled labor in any particular instance may be determined by the Secretary of Commerce and Labor upon the application of any person interested prior to any action in that direction by such person; such determination by the Secretary of Commerce and Labor to be reached after a full hearing and an investigation into the facts of the case.

7. The general policy adopted by Congress in 1882 of excluding Chinese laborers should be continued.

The question of Japanese and Korean immigration should be permitted to stand without further legislation so long as the present method of restriction proves to be effective.

An understanding should be reached with the British Government whereby East Indian laborers would be effectively prevented from coming to the United States.

8. The investigations of the Commission show an oversupply of unskilled labor in basic industries to an extent which indicates an oversupply of unskilled labor in the industries of the country as a whole, a condition which demands legislation restricting the further admission of such unskilled labor.

It is desirable in making the restriction that—

(a) A sufficient number be debarred to produce a marked effect upon the present supply of unskilled labor.

(b) As far as possible, the aliens excluded should be those who come to this country with no intention to become American citizens or even to maintain a permanent residence here, but merely to save enough, by the adoption, if necessary, of low standards of living, to return permanently to their home country. Such persons are usually men unaccompanied by wives and children.

(c) As far as possible the aliens excluded should also be those who, by reason of their personal qualities or habits, would least readily be assimilated or would make the least desirable citizens.

The following methods of restricting immigration have been suggested:

(a) The exclusion of those unable to read or write in some language.

(b) The limitation of the number of each race

arriving each year to a certain percentage of the average of that race arriving during a given period of years.

(c) The exclusion of unskilled laborers unaccompanied by wives or families.

(d) The limitation of the number of immigrants arriving annually at any port.

(e) The material increase in the amount of money required to be in the possession of the immigrant at the port of arrival.

(f) The material increase of the head tax.

(g) The levy of the head tax so as to make a marked discrimination in favor of men with families.

All these methods would be effective in one way or another in securing restrictions in a greater or less degree. A majority of the Commission favor the reading and writing test as the most feasible single method of restricting undesirable immigration.

The Commission as a whole recommends restriction as demanded by economic, moral, and social consideration, furnishes in its report reasons for such restriction, and points out methods by which Congress can attain the desired result if its judgment coincides with that of the Commission.

Introduction to the Final Report of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, chaired by Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, 1981

> "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?"
>
> Hillel
> *Sayings of the Fathers 1:14*

Our history is largely the story of immigration. Even the Indians were immigrants. The ancestors of all other Americans — when measured in terms of world history — came here only yesterday.

As a refuge and a land of opportunity, the United States remains the world's number one magnet. This fact reaffirms the faith of our founding fathers and the central values we have adopted as a nation — freedom, equality under the law, opportunity and respect for diversity. Throughout our history, our leaders have seen in immigration the articulation of these deeply held and religiously based values. President Ronald W. Reagan, in his speech accepting the Republican nomination for the presidency, reminded us of that fact when he said:

> "I ask you to trust that American spirit which knows no ethnic, religious, social, political, regional or economic boundaries: the spirit that burned with zeal in the hearts of millions of immigrants from every corner of the earth who came here in search of freedom..."

Then, examining the events of the recent past, the President asked:

> "Can we doubt that only a divine Providence placed this land — this island of freedom here as a refuge for all those people in the world you yearn to breathe free? Jews and Christians enduring persecution behind the Iron Curtain, the boat people of Southeast Asia, Cuba, and Haiti, the victims of drought and famine in Africa, and freedom fighters in Afghanistan and our countrymen held in savage captivity."

Letters and oral testimony to the Select Commission affirm the continuing vitality of President Reagan's characterization of the United States as a land of opportunity and as a beacon of liberty for immigrants. We have listened carefully to these moving voices, but we have also been faced with the reality of limitations on immigration. If it is a truism to say that the United States is a nation of immigrants, it is also a truism that it is one no longer, nor can it become a land of unlimited immigration, As important as immigration has been and remains to our country, it is no longer possible to say as George Washington did that we welcome all of the oppressed of the world, or as did the poet, Emma Lazarus, that we should take all of the huddled masses yearning to be free.

The United States of America — no matter how powerful and idealistic — cannot by itself solve the problems of world migration. This nation must continue to have some limits on immigration. Our policy — while providing opportunity to a portion of the world's population — must be guided by basic national interests of the people of the United States.

The emphasis in the Commission's recommendations, which are themselves complex, can be summed up quite simply: We recommend closing the back door to undocumented/illegal migration, opening the front door a little more to accommodate legal migration in the interests of this country, defining our immigration goals clearly and providing a structure to implement them effectively, and setting forth procedures which will lead to fair and efficient adjudication and administration of U.S. immigration laws.

The United States and the World

In emphasizing that our recommendations must be consistent with U.S. national interests, we are aware of the fact that we live in a shrinking, interdependent world and that world economic and political forces result in the migration of peoples. We also are aware of how inadequately the world is organized to deal with the dislocations that occur as a result of such migrations. None of the great international issues of our time — arms control, energy, food or migration — can be solved entirely within the framework of a nation-state world. Certainly, there is no unilateral U.S. solution to any of these problems; we must work with a world organized along nation-state lines and with existing international organizations. As a nation responsible for the destiny of its people and their descendants, we can better deal with these problems by working with other nations to build more effective international mechanisms. That is why we begin

our recommendations with a call for a new emphasis on internationalizing world migration issues. Since many, large-scale, international migrations are caused by war, poverty and persecution within sending nations, it is in the national interests of the United States to work with other nations to prevent or ameliorate those conditions.

Immigration and National Interest

That immigration serves humanitarian ends is unquestionable: most immigrants come to the United States seeking reunion with their families or as refugees. But in examining U.S. immigration policy and developing its recommendations, the Select Commission also asked another question: Is immigration and the acceptance of refugees in the U.S. national interest? That question was asked by many in this country when Fidel Castro pushed his own citizens out of Cuba knowing that their main destination would be the United States. Nothing about immigration — even widespread visa abuse and illegal border crossings — seems to have upset the American people more than the Cuban push-out of 1980. But these new entrants were neither immigrants nor refugees, having entered the United States without qualifying as either. Their presence brought home to most Americans the fact that U.S. immigration policy was out of control. It also brought many letters to the Select Commission calling for restrictions on U.S. immigration.

It is easy to understand the feelings which motivated these opinions, but in the light of hard-headed U.S. interests it would be a mistake to let the emotion generated by an unusual, almost bizarre episode guide national policy. While the Cuban push-out should not be permitted to happen again, the fact that it happened once should not blind us to the advantages of legally accepting a reasonable number of immigrants and refugees.

To the question: Is immigration in the U.S. national interest?, the Select Commission gives a strong but qualified yes. A strong yes because we believe there are many benefits which immigrants bring to U.S. society; a qualified yes because we believe there are limits on the ability of this country to absorb large numbers of immigrants effectively. Our work during the past 19 months has confirmed the continuing value of accepting immigrants and refugees to the United States, in addition to the humanitarian purpose served. The research findings are clear: Immigrants, refugees and their children work hard and contribute to the economic well-being of our society; strengthen our social security system and manpower capability; strengthen our ties with other nations; increase our language and cultural resources and powerfully demonstrate to the world that the United States is an open and free society.

New immigrants benefit the United States and reaffirm its deepest values. One can see them in New Orleans, where Indochinese refugees, hard at work during the day, crowd classrooms at night to learn English; in Fall River, Massachusetts, a city with more than 20 identifiable ethnic groups whose ancestral flags fly in front of City Hall and which has been restored to economic health by recent Portuguese immigrants; in Koreatown in Los Angeles, where Korean Americans have taken an inner-city slum and transformed it into a vital community; in Florida, where Cuban Americans have renewed the City of Miami, through economic ties to Latin America; in Chicago, where young Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union work two jobs in addition to attending high school; in San Antonio, where new Mexican immigrants are taking advantage of English-literacy classes and have joined Mexican Americans with many generations of U.S. residency to create a healthy economy and to strengthen trade and cultural ties with our border neighbor; and in Denver, where, in a third grade class, students from five countries are learning the history of the United States and are learning to count in two foreign languages in addition to English, and where, in February 1980, a Vietnamese American third grader who had been in this country for only six months, identified George Washington as "the father of our country."

But even though immigration is good for this country, the Commission has rejected the arguments of many economists, ethnic groups and religious leaders for a greater expansion in the number of immigrants and refugees to be accepted by the United States. Many of those in favor of expanded immigration have argued that the United States is capable of absorbing far greater numbers of immigrants than are now admitted. They contend that:

- The United States has the lowest population density of any wealthy, industrial nation in the world, with the exceptions of Canada and Australia; and

- The United States, with only six percent of the

world's population, still accounts for 25 percent of the world's gross national product.

They further point out that the United States faces serious labor shortages in the decade to come, particularly of young and middle-aged workers. Greatly expanded immigration, they believe, will go a long way towards providing needed workers.

Religious leaders have presented some of these same arguments from a relatively different perspective. They, too, note the vast resources and relatively low population density of the United States, but argue that this nation has a humanitarian responsibility to provide immigration opportunities to those seeking entry on the basis of family reunification or as refugees. They wish the United States to preserve its role as a country of large-scale immigration, despite fears about the entry of the foreign-born.

Historians, in their support of increased immigration, have cautioned against overly restrictionist tendencies. They point out that U.S. citizens have always been concerned about the arrival of immigrants, but note that immigrants have always made contributions to U.S. society. These scholars also state that the proportion of foreign-born citizens in the United States is now at an all-time low since 1850, when the government began to keep such statistics. If immigration did no harm to U.S. society when foreign-born citizens accounted for 14 to 15 percent of the population, they argue it would certainly cause no internal problems now.

The Select Commission is, however, recommending a more cautious approach. This is not the time for a large-scale expansion in legal immigration — for resident aliens or temporary workers — because the first order of priority is bringing undocumented/ illegal immigration under control, while setting up a rational system for legal immigration.

The Commission is, therefore, recommending a modest increase in legal immigration sufficient to expedite the clearance of backlogs — mainly to reunify families — which have developed under the current immigration system and to introduce a new system, which we believe will be more equitable and more clearly reflect our interests as a nation.

Such a modest increase will continue to bring the benefits of immigration to the United States without exacerbating fears — not always rational — of competition with immigrants. Such an increase recognizes that immigrants create as well as take jobs and readily pay more into the public coffers than they take out, as research completed by the Select Commission shows. It also recognizes that immigrants in some locales do compete for jobs, housing, and space in schools with citizens and previously entered resident aliens. In the case of refugees, there is an immediate competition with needy U.S. citizens for a variety of services which must be paid for by U.S. taxpayers. In many communities, local officials have complained about the strain which a sudden influx of refugees has placed on their capabilities to provide health services, schooling, and housing.

The American people have demonstrated that they are willing to do what must be done to save a portion of the world's refugees from persecution and sometimes from even death. That is why the Select Commission has endorsed the Refugee Act of 1980, even while questioning aspects of its administration. But it is impossible for the United States to absorb even a large proportion of the 16 million refugees in this world and still give high priority to meeting the needs of its own poor, especially those in its racial and ethnic minorities. Our present refugee policy may seem unduly harsh and narrow to many, particularly when a terribly poor country such as Somalia has more than one million refugees in their care. But we must be realistic about our obligations as a society to persons in need who already live in this country.

Undocumented/Illegal Migration

Illegal migrations of persons in search of work occur extensively throughout Europe, Latin America, as well as in Canada and the United States. Such migration to the United States is so extensive that hundreds of thousands of persons annually enter this country outside the law. Although these migrants usually do not stay, each year tens of thousands of other aliens remain in the United States illegally after coming here originally as students or other nonimmigrant aliens. The Select Commission is well aware of the widespread dissatisfaction among U.S. citizens with an immigration policy that seems to be out of control.

Some have argued before the Select Commission that there is virtually nothing that can be done about the tidal movements of people that are propelled by economic forces. They believe this is particularly true in a country such as ours, with land and coastal borders which are easy to cross and where millions of tourists and students, having entered, find it easy to stay. Some have further testified that the United States has nothing to fear from illegal migration since immigrants who come or remain outside of the law are self-selected, hard working, highly creative persons who, even if they remain in this country, aid rather than harm U.S. society. This is a view that the Commission believes does not sufficiently consider the serious problems created by illegal immigration.

One does not have to be able to quantify in detail all of the impacts of undocumented/illegal aliens in the United States to know that there are some serious adverse effects. Some U.S. citizens and resident aliens who can least afford it are hurt by competition for jobs and housing and a reduction of wages and standards at the workplace. The existence of a fugitive underground class is unhealthy for society as a whole and may contribute to ethnic tensions. In addition, widespread illegality erodes confidence in the law generally, and immigration law specifically, while being unfair to those who seek to immigrate legally.

The Select Commission's determination to enforce the law is no reflection on the character or the ability of those who desperately seek to work and provide for their families. Coming from all over the world, they represent, as immigrants invariably do, a portion of the world's most ambitious and creative men and women. But if U.S. immigration policy is to serve this nation's interests, it must be enforced effectively. This nation has a responsibility to its people — citizens and resident aliens — and failure to enforce immigration law means not living up to that responsibility.

The strong desire to regain control over U.S. immigration policy is one of several reasons for the Commission's unanimous vote to legalize a substantial portion of the undocumented/illegal aliens now in our country. Another is its acknowledgment that, in a sense, our society has participated in the creation of the problem. Many undocumented/illegal migrants were induced to come to the United States by offers of work from U.S. employers who recruited and hired them under protection of present U.S. law. A significant minority of undocumented/illegal aliens have been part of a chain of family migrants to the United States for at least two generations. Often entering for temporary work, these migrants began coming to the United States before this nation imposed a ceiling on legal immigration from the Western Hemisphere in 1968 and a 20,000 per-country visa ceiling on legal immigration for each Western Hemisphere country in 1976.

But that is not the main reason for legalizing a substantial portion of those who are here. Legalizing those who have settled in this country and who are otherwise qualified will have many positive benefits for the United States as a whole:

- Hard-working, law-abiding persons with a stake in U.S. society will come out into the open and contribute much more to it;

- No longer exploitable at the workplace, they no longer will contribute to depressing U.S. labor standards and wages;

- New and accurate information about migration routes and the smuggling of people into the United States will contribute to the targeting of enforcement resources to stop illegal migrations in the future;

- New and accurate information about the origins of migration will enable the United States to work with large sending countries in targeting aid and investment programs to deal with migration pressures at the source, in the villages and provinces of those countries;

- New and accurate information about patterns of visa abuse by those who entered as nonimmigrant aliens will help to make our visa issuance process and control at ports of entry more effective.

The recommended legalization program will help to enforce the law, however, only if other enforcement measures designed to curtail future illegal migration to the United States are instituted. That is why the Commission has linked the legalization program to the introduction of such measures. Recognizing that future migration pressures could lead to even higher levels of illegal migration to the United States, the Commission has

emphasized the development of effective enforcement strategies, including a new law to penalize employers who hire undocumented illegal aliens and new measures to control the abuse of non-immigrant status.

No one on this Commission expects to stop illegal migration totally or believes that new enforcement can be instituted without cost. But we do believe that we can reduce illegal entries sharply, and that the social costs of not doing so may be grave. What is a serious problem today, could become a monumental crisis as migration pressures increase.

The Reunification of Families

A better immigration system may help to reduce the pressures for illegal migration to some extent. A look at present U.S. immigration statistics reveals one relatively small but important source of illegal migration. Of the more than one million persons now registered at consular offices waiting for visas, more than 700,000 are relatives of U.S. citizens or resident aliens, including spouses and minor children of resident aliens. There is something wrong with a law that keeps out — for as long as eight years — the small child of a mother or father who has settled in the United States while a nonrelative or less close relative from another country can come in immediately. Certainly a strong incentive to enter illegally exists for persons who are separated from close family members for a long period of time.

What is basically wrong is that we have not made clear our priority to reunify the immediate relatives of U.S. residents regardless of their nationality. Among our recommendations are two which would help to do just that. The first puts immigrants whose entry into the United States would reunify families on a separate track from other immigrants. The second puts spouses and minor children of lawful permanent resident aliens under a separate, numerically limited category without country ceilings. Eliminating country ceilings in this category should help assure the reunification of the families of permanent resident aliens on a first-come, first-served basis within a fixed world ceiling.

Independent Immigrants

The creation of a separate category for nonfamily immigrants — the independent category — may also somewhat reduce illegal immigration by broadening immigration opportunities. It reaffirms the importance to the United States of traditional "new seed" immigrants who come to work, save, invest, and plan for their children and grandchildren, and creates an immigration channel for persons who cannot enter the United States on the basis of family reunification. It is the Commission's hope that this category will provide immigration opportunities for those persons who come from countries where immigration to the United States has not been recent or from countries that have no immigration base here.

Many other important issues have also been addressed by the Select Commission, including an upgrading of our system for administering U.S. immigration laws, the need to streamline deportation proceedings, and the importance of English-language acquisition. We have tried to address these and other issues with open minds, recognizing that few of them can be resolved easily.

That there is disagreement on some issues among Commissioners is not surprising since we represent a great variety of perspectives and since the complex issues of immigration are charged with emotion and special interest. Even though we have disagreed among ourselves in formulating some answers, we have reached consensus on a great many of the questions which faced us. Our basic concern has been the common good which must characterize good U.S. law, and we have tried to recommend policies that would be responsible, equitable, efficient and enforceable.

We have not, of course, answered every question and our answers are far from perfect, but we believe we asked the right questions and that the answers are free from cant, hypocrisy, and racism which have sometimes characterized U.S. immigration policy in years gone by. With that in mind, we hope that our recommendations, in the words of George Washington, "set a standard to which the wise and honest can repair."

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